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ABSTRACT

This study reports a survey of 35 teachers of English as a second language in general, vocational, and academic preparation programs in a British Columbia community college, which used ethnographic interviews to study teachers' perceptions of their role as mediators of culture in the classroom. Four dimensions of a teacher's cultural role were specifically addressed: being an example, explaining and interpreting, teaching interculturally, and listening and helping (being a friend). Findings indicate a range of teacher viewpoints on each dimension. On the dimension of "being an example," viewpoints ranged from willing acceptance of that role to denial; most simply acknowledged the function. All respondents reported various degrees of explaining and interpreting Canadian culture. The amount of time spent and the extent of the explanation depended on student language level, teacher willingness to stray from the planned lesson, and the immediate social situation. Teachers perceived that the function of teaching interculturally and confronting conflicts depended on their view of the students and the program type in which they were involved; those working with the most recently arrived and least fluent were the most likely to confront bigotry in the classroom. On the dimension of listening and helping, teacher response ranged from substantial involvement with to lack of awareness of students' personal problems, with most teachers at least approached by students. A six-page bibliography concludes the document. (MSE)

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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS AND CULTURE: AN INTERVIEW STUDY OF ROLE PERCEPTIONS

by

TRACY A. DEFOE

B. A., University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1978

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
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in

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We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Abstract

Culture - how do ESL instructors deal with it? This document reports on an interview study into the intercultural role perceptions of a group of ESL teachers of adult learners. Thirty-five ESL instructors in general, vocational and academic preparation programs at a community college in Vancouver, Canada were interviewed in the spring of 1985. The objectives of the project were 1) to provide an account of ESL instructors' perceptions of their role as mediators of culture 2) to arrive at an analysis of their viewpoints taking into account the type of program, the crosscultural experience of the teachers, and their definitions of their roles in teaching and interpreting North American culture to immigrant adults in their classes. The research method focussed on ethnographic interviews aimed at recording the cultural aspects of the individual ESL teacher's work from his or her own point of view. Analysis of the findings identified a range of viewpoints regarding the role dimensions of 'being an example,' 'explaining and interpreting,' 'teaching interculturally,' and 'listening and helping - being a friend.' Differences on some role dimensions were found between informants from different programs and between informants with different cultural reference groups. Many informants reported an instrumental orientation to culture teaching.

Table of Contents

I. Toward a definition of the cultural role of ESL teachers 1

A. The Problem 4

B. Background to the Problem 5

1. ESL in English Canada 5

2. Teachers of Adult ESL Learners 9

3. Culture and ESL Teachers 12

II. Review of Related Literature 14

III. The Study 31

A. The Method 31

B. The Pilot Interviews 37

C. The Setting 39

D. The Informants 41

E. The Research Experience 53

IV. Dimensions of the Teachers' Perceived Role 57

1. Culture in ESL 58

A. Being an Example 67

B. Explaining and Interpreting 73

C. Teaching Interculturally 80

D. Listening and Helping - Being a Friend 102

E. Summary 113

V. Conclusions 117

A. Discussion of the Findings 117

1. Theoretical and Educational Implications ...126

2. Suggestions for Further Research 129

B. Concluding Remarks 131

1. A Final Word from the Researcher 131

2. A Final Word from the Informants 132
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 135
APPENDIX A - LETTER ASKING FOR PARTICIPANTS 142
APPENDIX B - CONSENT FORM 143
APPENDIX C - INFORMANTS' LIST OF THE ELEMENTS OF CULTURE.144

List of Tables

I. Number of Informants from Each Program.................42

II. Informant's Age and Gender.............................44

III. Informant's Background and Cultural Identification...46

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Financial support for the project was provided through grants from the Educational Research Institute of B. C., and the Association of B. C. Teachers of English as an Additional Language (TEAL). Without these grants which funded the transcription of the interview tapes, this study would have been a great deal more difficult, and a great deal smaller. I thank both of these organizations for their support.

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Chapter I

TOWARD A DEFINITION OF THE CULTURAL ROLE OF ESL TEACHERS

As a teacher of English as a Second Language (ESL), I have often struggled with the roles imposed upon me by my employers, my students, and myself. Expectations about the roles of an ESL teacher abound on all sides; they are often competing and contradictory. While the first responsibility of an ESL teacher is obviously to convey an understanding of the language, the manner and motivation of that teaching is often called into question. The appropriate role for the teacher is left to negotiation between individual teachers and their classes. Each ESL instructor must reconcile the responsibility to teach adult learners to fit into accepted social practices of public life in North America with the virtues of tolerance and the values of cultural pluralism that are embodied in the idealized image of the ESL teacher as she appears in the literature. For the most part, published descriptions resolve any contradictions in this situation with an appeal to neutral professionalism.

Among the roles ascribed to the archetypal ESL instructor are teacher and model of the language, representative and interpreter of her culture, learning facilitator, friend, counsellor and advocate, to name a few. By and large, the roles that do not directly concern language instruction *per se* have emerged as ESL instruction has become less dominated by the application of linguistic models and theories, and more concerned with the social and communicative competencies developed by the learner. This was precipitated to a large extent by the failure of linguistic science to provide "the method" that would ensure easy and complete acquisition, and by the realization that the language learning process did not necessarily take place in the isolation of the classroom.

Today, while ESL teachers are still expected to understand linguistic theories and terminology, and to master the grammar of the language in the traditional, analytic sense, they are also commonly charged with the job of fostering communicative and, most recently, intercultural competencies in the adults with whom they work. This implies 'teaching' the learners to share the expectations and social understandings of integrated members of English Canadian society, and to recognize those cultural understandings for what they are. Courses for ESL teachers generally pay little attention to preparing the ESL teachers for this role of "cultural ambassador" or "cultural counsellor" although anecdotal accounts of this function have appeared over the years.[1] For the research project outlined in this paper I spoke with ESL instructors at a community college in Vancouver in order to discover and record their perceptions and definitions of their intercultural role.

As mentioned above, examinations of the cultural learning relationship between adult teachers and adult learners almost always mask any contradiction in motivations or practices with an assumption of neutrality, and describe the ESL teacher as a professional who accepts and cares for learners as individuals regardless of their values, beliefs and behaviours. From this perspective, the role of the ESL teacher as interpreter and model of her culture is formulated and described from outside the experience as if cultural practices were information that could be laid out for learners like a table of irregular verbs. The dynamic and interactive nature of the experience of working with adults of diverse backgrounds, the challenges of living up to whatever ideals the teacher may hold about her personal conduct, and the possibility that professional neutrality may be an impossible and even questionable ideal for the ESL teacher to embrace, are all too often overlooked in academic publications in the field. Yet, however informal or unstated the cultural orientation function of the ESL program, this cultural learning is a reality for immigrants to Canada associated very closely with learning English[2] and one acknowledged by ESL instructors themselves.[3]

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[1] See for example Y. Rampaul, "The Role of the Teacher in the Adult ESL Class in Manitoba" *Manitoba Modern Language Review* 16(3, 1982) :5-12.
For a discussion of other accounts see chapter II.

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[2] M. Disman "ESL and a New Culture." *TESL Talk* 13(3, 1981):71-81.

[3] For example, in 1974 when Mary Ashworth conducted a survey of ESL teachers, she found that for every teacher who felt learning the language was the greatest problem faced by ESL learners, four responded that "adjusting to the new culture" was the biggest difficulty.
M. Ashworth, "Results and Issues From a National Survey of ESL Programs" in A. Wolfgang, ed.,*Education of Immigrant Students: Issues and Answers* Symposium Series 5 (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education), 1975 pp. 164-183.

A. THE PROBLEM

This research project asks ESL teachers about their place in their learners' adjustment to life in Vancouver. The objectives of the project are to provide an account of ESL instructors' perceptions of their role as mediators of culture and to arrive at an analysis of their viewpoints taking into account the type of program, the cross-cultural experience of the informants, and their definitions of their roles in teaching and interpreting North American culture to the immigrant adults in their classes. The project also aims to work toward a definition of the cultural role of ESL teachers based upon the experiences of a group.

Through ethnographic interviews with ESL instructors drawn from the college's programs, the study addresses the question:

> How do teachers of adults learning English as a Second Language at the community college define their roles and perceive their functions as teachers of Canadian culture?

This question demands an exploration of the individual instructor's perspective on his or her work. Guiding questions throughout the field work period focussed upon reported classroom practices, informants' accounts of their relationships with students, the perceived ways in which culture figured in ESL teaching, and the informants' cultural backgrounds and intercultural experiences.

As described in ESL curricula and commonly understood within Canadian ESL, the term culture as a goal for understanding refers specifically to "attitudes, values and behaviour that are commonly found in Canadian society,"[4] as well as physical arrangements, material goods, and social processes that are characteristic of life in North America. By roles and functions, I mean the pedagogical, social and interpersonal ways that ESL teachers interact with their learners.

Underlying this relationship is the larger issue of how immigrants are received by Canadian society in general and the purposes of ESL instruction for society and for the learner. The background to the study outlines the social context of ESL in English-speaking Canada, examines what little is known about teachers of adult ESL learners, and introduces the problem of culture and ESL teachers.

B. BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

1. ESL IN ENGLISH CANADA

As long as people have been coming to settle in Canada, second language learning has been a constant theme in our interpersonal communication. In English Canada, where the dominant ideology of 'anglo' conformity has led generations of immigrants to anglicize their names and lose touch with their heritage languages, cultures and communities, the learning and teaching of English have always been undertaken in the knowledge that fluency in the language would affect opportunities in both employment and education.

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[4] British Columbia Ministry of Education, *English as a Second Language for Adults - A Curriculum Guide* (Victoria, B.C.: Ministry of Education, 1981), p. iii.

This remains the case today, despite the Canadian government's 1971 multiculturalism policy which declared that "although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other".[5] This same policy's pledge to support the learning of English or French to ensure full participation in Canadian society has led the federal government to sponsor and provide funds for instruction in the official languages across the country. As many critics of multiculturalism have pointed out, however, there is an inherent contradiction in this policy. It claims to support the retention of ancestral or original cultural identity while at the same time disallows the structural support and multilingualism that such a pluralist stand would demand.[6] This contradiction reflects to some extent the ambiguity toward ethnic diversity found in Berry, Kalin and Taylor's comprehensive study of ethnic attitudes in Canadians where they found that multiculturalism was generally accepted as a social reality, but acceptance of cultural diversity was limited and discrimination in favour of the 'founding' groups was evident.[7] Such findings have led critics to condemn multiculturalism as an ideology that masks the intolerant aspects of Canadian social reality and trivializes ethnicity to festivals and special foods.

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[5] House of Commons, *Debates* Statement by P.E. Trudeau, October 8, 1971.

[6] See for example J. Mallea, "Multiculturalism Within a Bilingual Framework: A Note on the Quebecois Response" *Multiculturalism* 1(2, 1977):3-5.
K. Moodley, "Canadian Multiculturalism as Ideology" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 6 (3, 1983):321-331.
J. Porter, "Ethnic Pluralism in Canada" in N. Glazer and D. Moynihan, Eds., *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), 1975.
J. Young, "Education in a Multicultural Society: What Sort of Education? What Sort of Society? *Canadian Journal of Education* 4 (3, 1979):5-21.

While children of other mother tongues have traditionally learned English and been acculturated or integrated through the public school system, the language education of adults has never been universal nor uniform. Today, ESL programs for adults are mounted, funded and administered across the country by all levels of government[8] in a confusing and unequal manner that has led to duplication of some services and lack of others.

Supported by a variety of funding agreements, ESL classes for adults are offered by all levels of educational institutions from public schools to colleges and universities, as well as through community centres, immigrant service groups and other community organizations, and occasionally, through unions or employers. Because immigration and employment are linked by the federal government as a matter of policy, many of these ESL classes are mandated to provide the language education to enable non-English speaking adults to successfully join the labour market. In fact, some programs that do not directly serve as pre-employment programs receive partial financial support; others operate on a cost-recovery basis where the students' fees pay the entire program costs.

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[7] J. Berry, R. Kalin and D. Taylor, *Multiculturalism and Ethnic Attitudes in Canada* (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services) 1978.
See also R. Kaylin and D. Rayko "Discrimination in Evaluative Judgements Against Foreign-accented Job Candidates" *Psychology Reports* 43(1978).

[8] G. Newsham and P. Acheson, *ESL in Canada* (Montreal: Concordia University TESL Centre), 1978.

In general there are three kinds of ESL programs: pre-employment or vocational programs as mentioned above, college preparation or academic programs for those who wish to continue their education, and general programs for those who wish to improve their English language skills. These three categories of programs are differentiated administratively by funding sources and by educators. In addition, these programs aim to meet the different language goals of the adult learner.

At the college, as elsewhere in English Canada, the vocational ESL program is often the starting place for learners. It provides instruction at the beginner and intermediate ability levels to people who are unable to join the work force at an entry level job because they are not able to communicate in English. Tuition for these students is usually paid by the Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission (C.E.I.C.) from which the 'Manpower' label for the program is derived. This program is pre-employment largely in intention; for students who reach the required language level, employment and job issues are dealt with in the final month of this five month program. Vocational ESL students, who are often recent immigrants, attend school on a full-time basis (that is six hours per day, five days per week). Vocational ESL is still ESL; it is not job training. The course of study does not include a work component and in no way promises a job to students upon completion.

There are many kinds of general ESL programs. In the case under study, the general ESL program is for part-time students. Courses are offered at all ability levels with some special purpose classes for improving pronunciation, reading and writing. The program of study is defined by measured language competencies and prepares students for the academic college preparation program. The academic program gives students documented equivalence to high school English and Social Studies. This certificate is the ultimate goal for many of the college's adult learners, while others view it as a prerequisite to post-secondary studies.

2. TEACHERS OF ADULT ESL LEARNERS

In 1978, Newsham and Acheson conducted their *ESL in Canada* survey, the only Canada-wide survey of ESL programs that has been done.[9] There are many gaps in their data, and even at the time their numbers were considered underestimates. They found 1,051 ESL teachers in general adult programs and 321 in university adult programs. Most of the teachers had part-time contracts and about half had no training in ESL methodology. They collected no demographic data on these teachers, nor on the 1500 people enrolled in TESL (Teaching ESL) courses at Canadian universities at that time.[10]

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[9] *Ibid.*

The ESL field today is likely still dominated by teachers on part-time or sessional contracts; in British Columbia, teachers are usually required by their employers to have completed ESL teaching methods courses. The number of adult ESL instructors is difficult to estimate. Today, the Association of B.C. Teachers of English as an Additional Language (TEAL) has over 500 members, the majority of whom work with adults.[11] However, not all ESL teachers choose to join BCTEAL, and in any case the association does not ask for demographic information from members, nor has the membership ever been surveyed as part of a research project other than the one cited above.

In light of this lack of information about adult ESL teachers, I can only assume that, with certain qualifications, they are like most teachers; that is, they are white, native English-speaking, and drawn from the mainstream of English Canadian society.[12] I would qualify that generalization by saying that ESL teachers, because of the situations in which they work, are required to be tolerant of job insecurities, and able to work with relatively little imposed structure or curricula. Since ESL classes are always a meeting place for people of various cultures, one may expect that ESL instructors are tolerant of, and interested in, people of different backgrounds. Since many of the ESL teachers that I know in Vancouver are proficient in a language other than English, and many have had experience living and teaching in other countries, it may be that as a group they have more open attitudes toward others, though I know of no research that has investigated this possibility.

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[10] *Ibid.* pp. 105-108.
[11] This estimate is drawn from the researcher's examination of the TEAL database.
[12] K. McLeod, "Multiculturalism and Multicultural Education: Policy and Practice" in D. Dorotich, ed., *Education and Canadian Multiculturalism: Some Problems and Some Solutions* (Saskatoon,Saskatchewan: CSSI), 1981, pp. 12-26.

ESL teachers who work with adults, then, have not been formally studied in Canada. To sketch an overview of these teachers as a group, I will rely upon a few observations based upon my own experience. Because a provincial teaching certificate is not required to work with adults, some ESL teachers do not have formal training as teachers. Others may have started out as elementary or secondary school teachers; at one time, literacy programs for ESL adults were dominated by ex-elementary school teachers because, as one program coordinator told me, "they knew how to teach reading." Today it is recognized that adults do not learn to read the same way that children do, and adult literacy is a specialization in itself.

A number of ESL teachers began teaching English overseas, on the basis of the simple qualification of being college educated native-speakers of the language. This practical experience was often turned into a career upon return to Canada where experienced instructors were in demand. As ESL and adult education became formally recognized areas of study, courses in methodology and specialized linguistics, and TESL diploma programs were organized by universities. Completion of these courses is now usually considered a requirement for employment. Graduate level programs have contributed to the professionalization of ESL teachers, and classroom teachers with graduate degrees are not uncommon.

3. CULTURE AND ESL TEACHERS

All of the ESL teachers' roles mentioned in the introduction have cultural dimensions and cultural implications. For example, teachers organize their classes according to their own culture-bound ideas of how a class should be organized. Similarly, all of the learners bring to the ESL class their own notions of a school, and of others, and of Canadians. Both teachers and learners have expectations; in the average adult ESL class considerable range of cultural, educational, and social class backgrounds may be represented.

Since most people the world over tend to be ethnocentric and view their own culture as "the best,"[13] it is not surprising that ESL teachers report instances of group and individual conflict in their classes. These conflicts are often attributable to clashes of expectations and of assumptions about the appropriate behaviour of the teacher, and of the other learners.[14] The informants in this study reported that conflicts sometimes arise from bigotry and intergroup tensions. Such conflicts, the teachers said, are evidence of the sometimes difficult adjustments that many immigrants make in moving from a relatively homogeneous to a more multicultural society.

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[13] W. E. Lambert, "Culture and Language as Factors in Learning and Education" in G. Verma and R. Bagley, eds., *Self-concept Achievement and Multicultural Education* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd.), 1982.

The ESL classroom is an intercultural environment, and all ESL instructors teach interculturally, whether or not they are aware of it. It is precisely because the intercultural aspects of ESL are usually viewed as individual instances or isolated cases, and because the teacher's role in these relationships is so often glossed over that I feel this is an area that begs examination and clarification.

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[14] Examples of these reports are discussed in chapter II.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A review of literature bearing on the question of how ESL teachers of adults perceive their roles as teachers of culture faces two problems at the outset. First, there is very little research and sparse enough writing in the field on the cultural aspects of second language teaching. Second, the literature in fields such as sociology, sociolinguistics, social psychology, cross-cultural studies, language education, and adult education all have potential to offer perspectives on some aspects of the problem, if only by extension or analogy. The literature to be discussed here will be that which relates most directly to the research question; work in ESL as well as in other disciplines will be drawn upon for both background information and research findings that enhance understanding of the problem at hand.

Among the roles ascribed to the archetypal ESL teacher are teacher and model of the language, representative and interpreter of her culture, learning facilitator, friend, counsellor and advocate. All of these roles have cultural dimensions and are to some extent defined by the expectations and interactions between the teacher and the ESL learner. Depending on the point of view of those involved, these roles may be seen as having a positive or negative effect on the students' self-image and adaptation.

Several authors discuss the potential for the monocultural ESL teacher to, consciously or unconsciously, act as an assimilationist force in the classroom.[15] This is presented as a negative aspect of the role of representative of a cultural group, where the the teacher acts upon unexamined "truths" which are perhaps ethnocentric, sexist, or assume superiority of one type of person over another on the basis of education, social class, or some other characteristic. The image here is of the teacher as ideologue whose unexamined agenda may be to convert students to her way of thinking. In this scenario, the learner is seen as deficient and the socio-cultural values associated with the dominant English-speaking community are intended to replace rather than supplement those of the culture of origin. In the "Americanization"[16] or "Canadianization"[17] of immigrants these attitudes and objectives have been made explicit at different times in North American history.

As an 'expert' informant on the cultural values of the English-speaking society being explored by her students, the teacher is cast in the role of explaining or interpreting that culture for ESL students. Bell asserts the importance of this role in adult ESL classes where community orientation may become the vehicle for language instruction leading the instructor to become the interpretor of the 'new' society.[18] Similarly, C. Bratt Paulston writes of the teacher as 'cultural broker,' the most important source of information about all "these strange new ways of doing things," and urges ESL teachers to take this responsibility very seriously.[19] These two examples are illustrative of the many portrayals of ESL teachers as the teachers of relevant cultural information. This function is recognized in foreign language teaching as well.[20]

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[15] See for example E. L. Judd, "TESOL as a Political Act: A Moral Question" in J. Handscombe, R. A. Orem and B. P. Taylor, eds., *On TESOL' 83 : The Question of Control* (Washington,D.C.: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), 1984 (pp. 265-273); and T. McArthur, "Where Do YOU Stand in the Classroom? - A Consideration of Roles, Rules and Priorities in the Language Classroom" *Op.cit.* pp. 275-283; and also J. Williams "Immigrant Children: School's Role in Integration" in J. Rex and D. Moore, eds., *Race, Community and Conflict* (London: Oxford University Press),1966.

[16] E.C. Condon, "Teaching the Cultural Context of the ESL Class." Paper presented at the 7th Annual Convention of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, San Juan, Puerto Rico, May 11,1973. ED 086033.

[17] R. Wardhaugh, "The Education of the new Canadian: 1918 and 1981 The Persistence of Certain Themes" *TESL Talk* 14 (2, 1982):141-154.

Cultural orientation information may constitute a considerable portion of ESL course content and provide the thematic or situational context for language instruction. Tollefson's review of research on the resettlement of refugees from Southeast Asia examined its implications for ESL instruction in the United States.[21] He reported that almost half of all class time in programs for refugees in the United States is spent on cultural orientation which he characterized as "appropriate for beginning students as long as tangible objects and realistic contexts are used to create opportunities for English use."[22] Teachers of these ESL classes for refugees then, provide considerable cultural orientation through their explanations and interpretations of American society and its values and practices.

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[18] J. Bell, "Orientation" *TESL Talk* 14 (1-2, 1983):130-135.
[19] C. Bratt Paulston, *English as a Second Language: What Research Says to the Teacher* (Wahington, D.C.: National Education Association), 1980, p. 25 ED 202010.
[20] See for example, R. C. Layfayette "Teaching Culture": Stategies and Techniques" in *Language in Education: Theory and Practice* (Arlington, Virginia: Center for Applied Linguistics),1 (1978):1-28 ED 157407.
[21] J.W. Tollefson, "Research on Refugee Resettlement: Implications for Instructional Programs" *TESOL Quarerly* 19 (4,1985):753-764.

The role of interpreter of culture is sometimes portrayed in a very positive light, especially where the interpreting teacher is also an active learner. That is, where the teacher continues to learn not only about culture as a general concept, but also about her students' cultures and about her own culture through the students' eyes. This exchange of insight depends upon the parties concerned listening to each other and carefully considering what they hear. The remark made or question posed, for example, may be followed through to its underlying assumptions and to uncover the unspoken questions that lead up to the formulation of the inquiry. This sharing of interpretations is presented as a 'dialogue' between equals in Wallerstein's book on culture in the adult ESL classroom,[23] a work that she calls a re-invention of the philosophy of Paulo Freire. Notably in this approach, both the ESL learners and the instructor interpret the new culture through their dialogue.

Writing about teachers in general, Carl A. Grant focussed upon the teacher as "mediator of culture" which he defined as "a person who both transmits knowledge of the culture and interprets the knowledge being transmitted."[24] Grant, who was concerned with teachers of children, argued that the role of mediator of culture is the most important role for teachers to understand in order to properly carry on their work in a pluralistic society. Like a public school teacher in a multiethnic class, the ESL instructor typically faces students from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

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[22] *Ibid.* pp. 755.
[23] N. Wallerstein, *Language and Culture in Conflict: Problem-posing in the ESL Classroom* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley), 1983.

Many respected ESL professionals have written their perspectives on the issue of the cultural or intercultural role most appropriate to the ESL teacher. Their reflections, often aimed at student teachers or practicing teachers, have a persuasive sincerity and seem to have resulted from introspection on their experience in language classrooms. These writings focus on what ESL teachers ought to do rather than what they think they do or actually do. Mary Finocchario's analysis of the complexity of the teacher's role serves as an example of this kind of writing.[25] Finocchario lists the twenty-five characteristics of superior teachers whom she charges with the responsibility to guide students to attain both bilingualism and an appreciation of cultural pluralism. In her concluding statement she urges teachers to:

> ...change the direction of our teaching whenever and wherever necessary to extinguish or rechannel

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[24] C.A. Grant, "The Mediator of Culture: A Teacher Role Revisited" *Journal of Research and Development in Education* 11 (1, 1977):102-117.

[25] M. Finocchario, *The Crucial Variable in TESOLD: the Teacher* (Washington, D.C.: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Speech to the National Institute of Education, March 4, 1974. ED 091 948.

> aggression, to help our students accept another's opinions and feelings, or to eradicate bigotry and racial prejudice.[26]

While these are admirable goals for any teacher, such idealized codes of conduct abstracted from personal experiences are much easier to write about than to realize in one's own actions. The less than perfect individual, working as a ESL teacher or aspiring to become one, would have difficulty living up to the standards of Finocchario's statement. Hers is by no means a unique treatment of the cultural role of ESL teachers.[27] The interview study reported herein was undertaken in response to this kind of idealized prescription for the cultural role of ESL teachers.

Another kind of article about the cultural role of ESL teachers is written with direct reference to actual classes and programs. These articles often take the form of reports about the program in which the author teaches[28] or more rarely, a critical analysis of an existing program's approach to culture teaching such as that done by Gail P. Kelly.[29] In the case of the former descriptive reports, the purpose is to share a particular solution to the balancing of language and cultural needs of students. Other writers promote a particular method or approach to dealing with cultural content that they have found to be successful. The stress here is often on integrating cultural understanding with the regular classroom activities. Beverly McLeod's call for an anthropological approach to language teaching is an example. She advocates viewing the classroom as a neutral place where cultural patterns and attitudes can be openly discussed.[30] Others offer ideas and a rationale for teaching related culture in any foreign or second language class.[31]

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[26] *Ibid.* p. 31.

[27] See also H. B. Altman, "What is Language Teaching" in *The Second Language Classroom: Directions for the 1980's* J. Alatis, H. Altman and P. Alatis, eds., (New York: Oxford University Press), 1981 pp. 7-19.
H. D. Brown "Affective Factors in Second Language Learning" *Op.cit* pp. 113-129.
M. Saville-Troike *Foundations for Teaching English as a Second Language: Theory and Method for Multicultural Education* (Englewood Cliffs,New Jersey: Prentice-Hall,Inc.) 1976.[especially chapter 4, pp. 45-67].

[28] For example J. Bell,"Orientation" *op cit*. pp. 131-140.

[29] G. P. Kelly, "Adult Education for Vietnamese Refugees: Commentary on Pluralism in America" *The Journal of Ethnic*

In Canada, teachers and administrators have tried to reconcile the ideals and issues of multiculturalism with their experience. Since multiculturalism promotes the notion of Canadian society as a cultural mosaic as opposed to an assimilationist melting pot, this leads those who teach English, especially to immigrants, to confront the basic contradiction in the policy as discussed earlier. After all, their efforts are largely aimed at facilitating their students' fit with the norms and expectations of Canadian society. Their conclusions range from the affirmation of community-based ESL classes as a good place for the

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[29] (cont'd) *Studies* 5 (4,1978):55-64.

[30] B. McLeod, "The Relevance of Anthropology to Language Teaching" *TESOL Quarterly* 10 (2, 1976).

[31] G. Moskovitch, *Caring and Sharing in the Foreign Language Class, A Source Book of Humanistic Techniques* (Rowley, Mass: Newbury House), 1978.
H. Ned Seelye *Teaching Culture: Strategies for Foreign Language Educators* (Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook Co.), 1974.

promotion of multicultural attitudes in students or in teachers[32] to the denunciation of adult ESL as an example of policy that in practice is too often an economic and social limiting force in the lives of immigrants.[33] Other aspects of intergroup contact in ESL classes such as racism and prejudice are also addressed under the banner of multiculturalism and ESL.[34]

One of the few field studies that gave some attention to the cultural aspects of ESL teaching was a survey of ESL school programs conducted by Mary Ashworth in 1974.[35] Response to the questionnaire showed a concern for cultural conflict between home and school, and for the teacher's role in easing the 'new Canadian' child's adjustment to Canadian culture. In the conclusions drawn, the teacher is identified as the most important element in the program.[36] For this reason, Ashworth called for better communication between ESL teachers as well as for specialist preparation for ESL teachers and responsible supervision by school boards. A follow-up survey to this 1974 project is underway at the time of this writing.

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[32] R. Baker, "Multiculturalism in Community-based ESL Classes" *Manitoba Modern Language Review* 16 (3, 1982):1-4.
[33] K. Vallance, "ESL Teachers as Social Advocate" *TEAL Ocassional Papers* (6, 1982):19-21. Gail P.Kelly, *Op.cit.*, reaches similar conclusions about the orientation courses for Vietanamese refugees in the USA.
[34] For example, C. Steckler, "Racism and Multicultural Education", *TEAL Occasional Papers* (Vancouver: Association of B.C.TEAL), (6, 1982):21-32.
Also, J. Bechtold, "The Field Trip: Language Learning Outside the Classroom" *TESL Talk* 14 (1, 1982):202-211.
[35] M. Ashworth, *Immigrant Children and Canadian Schools* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart), 1975.
[36] *Ibid.* p. 189.

In another report of this same project, Ashworth concludes with some basic questions about the nature of the society Canadians hope to build and to preserve, and the kind of commitment we are willing to make to education for equality of opportunity both for newly-arrived and native-born.[37] The kinds of answers that might be given to those questions as demonstrated in the range of perspectives outlined in the review of ESL teachers' published comments on their cultural roles foreshadows the possible range of viewpoints to be found among the teachers interviewed in this study.

ESL textbooks and teacher's guides to curricula sometimes have statements about the approach taken to culture in the materials or course. In *A Conversation Book: English in Everyday Life*[38] for example, the authors are very clear about their assumption of the role of the teacher as a resource facilitator who encourages individuals in a self-directed learning group to become independent learners. These books take a cross-cultural orientation approach to cultural learning, stressing comparison of similarities and differences in cultural practices and awareness of the influences of personal bias and values.[39] Units in the B.C. Ministry of Education publication *English as a Second*

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[37] M. Ashworth "Results and Issues from a National Survey of ESL Programs" in A. Wolfgang, ed., *Education of Immigrant Students: Issues and Answers* (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Symposium Series 5), 1975 pp. 165-183.

[38] T .K .Carver and S. O. Fontinos, *A Conversation Book - English in Everyday Life (Books I & II)* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall,Inc.), 1977.

[39] *Ibid.* p. viii.

Language for Adults: A Curriculum Guide[40] contain cultural notes outlining beliefs and values that underly the shared assumption of the dominant community. Although the guide does not define the teacher's role explicitly, the emphasis placed on needs assessment and the community roles of the adult learner imply a teacher who is both facilitating cultural insights and interpreting the dominant culture to her students. The guide names mutual adaptation by the immigrant and "the adopted culture"[41] as the process at hand in the social integration of the immigrant.

Margaret Beattie, in her review of methodology books and textbooks which make reference to the teaching of culture, comments that more surprising than what is written about the teaching of culture in ESL books is that so many of them fail to mention it at all. Beattie is critical of ethnocentrism in books aimed at the international market and of several Canadian publications that treat teaching about culture and citizenship as a neutral activity.[42] She points out that ethnocentrism, social class bias and political perspectives may all influence the teacher's conscious or unconscious goals, and that the goals of the hiring agency may inject a complicating factor.[43] This assumption of neutrality of cultural and social information is one that I anticipated in the interviews. Similarly, the conflicting demands of conscience and employer and the teacher's own awareness of personal bias were also identified by this researcher as probably relevant. The widespread omission of the discussion of cultural learning and teaching rests upon the assumption that there is something straightforward about it.

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[40] B.C. Ministry of Education, *English as a Second Language for Adults: A Curriculum Guide* (Victoria: B. C. Ministry of Education), 1981.
[41] *Ibid.* p. 23.
[42] M. Beattie, "The Teaching of Culture Through Language" *TESL Talk* 14 (1-2, 1983):1-12.
[43] *Ibid.* p. 12.

In the 1980's, there has been a shift in terminology among some writers on the subject of teaching culture in ESL programs. As in the past decade ESL instruction was preoccupied with the goal of communicative competence,[44] so is there now a growing concern for the development of interactional and intercultural competencies.[45] The central claim in English for Intercultural Communication (EIC) is that English is the international language of business and technology and does not 'belong' to any one country nor to any one social group, though the use of English is always culture-bound.[46] This perspective is associated with cross-cultural training that goes beyond language instruction. Those involved with English taught as a foreign language are quick to point out that their aim is to develop bilingual but not necessarily bicultural people while the native English-speaking teacher in a host society (that is, one receiving foreign students or immigrants) is much more likely to aim toward both bilingualism and biculturalism.[47]

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[44] C. Bratt Paultson, "Linguistic and Communicative Competence." *TESOL Quarterly* 8 (4, 1974):347-362.
[45] For a discussion of this shift and its implications see H. Krasnick, "From Communicative Competence to Cultural Competence" in J. Handscombe, R. A. Orem, and B. P. Taylor, eds., *On TESOL' 83: The Question of Control* (Washington, D.C.: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), 1984, pp. 209-221.
[46] J. Baxter, "ESL for Intercultural Competence: An Approach to Intercultural Communication Training", in D. Landis and R. W. Brislin, eds., *Handbook of Intercultural Training, Volume II: Issues in Training Methodology* (New York: Pergamon Press), 1983, pp. 290-324.

Baxter,[48] who advocates English for Intercultural Competence, proposes a model in which intercultural communicative competence is an integrated aspect of English language teaching. He asserts that because ESL looked to linguistic competence for a theoretical foundation, it was both isolated from, and ignored by, the field of intercultural training. With concern for communication came a recognition of the role of socio-cultural factors in language learning and teaching. If Baxter's analysis is correct and intercultural communication is a growing concern of English language instruction world-wide, then an awareness of this perspective and perhaps some advocates of it may be uncovered among the teachers interviewed. There is some evidence of the contact between cross-cultural studies and ESL (or EIC or EFL) in, for example, the anthropological approach put forward by McLeod[49] and in some clasroom textbooks.[50]

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[47] C. Alptekin and M. Alptekin, "The Question of Culture: EFL teaching in Non-English Speaking Countries" *ELT Journal* 38 (1, 1984):14-20.

[48] *Op.cit.*

[49] *Op.cit.*

[50] For example, D. Levine and M. Adelman, *Beyond Language: Intercultural Communication for English as a Second Language* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall), 1982.

Two collections of articles edited by Stephen Bochner examine the problem faced by an individual acting in a cross-cultural capacity from the perspective of social psychology.[51] His efforts to synthesize this research, point the way for one line of questioning pursued in the interviews done for this study. In keeping with the established patterns of inquiry in psychology, and in contrast to the ethnographic style of this study, Bochner's approach to the problem of cross-cultural communication is empirical and operational. Drawing upon research studies done in cross-cultural contact situations such as Peace Corps workers abroad, foreign students in the United States, and intergroup contacts in Australia, Bochner proposes a model of cross-cultural interaction. This model sets out three types of cultural learning, and proposes the two roles of translator or synthesizer for the mediating person. Another important aspect of the model is its consideration of the outcomes of "cultures-in-contact" at the individual level, as it lists a variety of psychological responses to the second culture that depend upon the relationships of cultural groups as insiders and outsiders in the society in question.

Although the designation 'immigrants' is listed as an example of a cross-cultural contact, the possible content and form of cultural adaptation faced by immigrants is not explicitly dealt with in these collections and must be inferred from the treatment given other contact situations such as the foreign student or worker abroad, and the tourist or travelling businessman.[52] Teachers are mentioned in the context of young Americans teaching for the Peace Corps and Filipinos teaching in an international school.[53] Neither of these situations is analagous to that of an instructor teaching the language of the majority to an immigrant adult. Nevertheless, the direction taken by Bochner in extracting the intention of the 'mediating person' and his or her reference group as the two criteria of whether the person is acting out of the interests of one group (ie. as a partisan) or is acting neutrally, or in the interests of both as a bipartisan is relevent to ESL instruction.

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[51] S. Bochner, ed., *Cultures in Contact* International Series in Experimental Social Psychology, Volume 1 (Oxford: Pergamom Press), 1982.
and S. Bochner, ed., *The Mediating Person: Bridges Between Cultures* (Boston, Mass.: G. K. Hall), 1981.

Bochner's model of cross-cultural interaction maintains the social psychology perspective of the individual seen in view of group membership. He categorizes a person working between two cultures as an explainer, a translator, or as a mediator, as necessarily in a conflict of group interests.

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[52] Throssell does include immigrants in his illustrations of different cultures in Australian society. R. P. Throssell, "Toward a Multicultural Society: The Role of Government Departments and Officials in Developing Cross-cultural Relations in Australia" in S. Bochner, ed., *The Mediating Person: Bridge Between Cultures* (Boston, Mass :G. K. Hall), 1981, pp. 246-272.

[53] M. W. Sullivan, "When in Rome. . . But Who's Roman? The Mutual Adaptaion of Cultural Insiders and Outsiders" S. Bochner, ed., *The Mediating Person: Bridge Between Cultures* (Boston, Mass.: G. K. Hall), 1981, pp. 273-298.

The partisan teacher could resolve this by being an assimilator, a position which assumes the superiority of the dominant culture. The bipartisan teacher may be caught outside both groups as a 'marginal,' while the mediating teacher serves as a link between cultural systems, a synthesizer of disparate values, especially where action is a consequence of the contact.

Although Bochner has not explored the context of ESL teachers and their immigrant adult students, his model does provide an organizational structure that applies to this situation. Specifically, Bochner focusses on the key issues of the teacher's motivation and group reference, two factors that are built into the present study as crucial definers of a teacher's perspective to culture teaching because I previously identified them in my own reflections on the cultural aspects of the role of the ESL teacher of adults.[54] In addition, Bochner provides some justification for group analysis of perspectives. Further, he stresses the idea that a mediator (i.e. a non-assimilator) is also a culture-learner, an attitude I expected some ESL teachers to report.

The interaction between an ESL teacher and an adult student which Bochner would analyse in group membership terms would be interpreted through what was said and how it was said by sociolinguistic analysis. Although sociolinguistics takes the group identity givens of gender, ethnicity, and class as parameters within which people create and act out their social identities, interpretive sociolinguistic analysis seeks to show how symbolic meaning and action are interrelated. Thus sociolinguistics rejects behavioural reports in favour of careful examination of discourse.

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[54] T. Defoe, Some Cultural Aspects of the Role of the ESL Teacher of Adults,(unpublished paper, University of B.C.), 1984 (Typewritten).

Within this discipline, for example, Gumperez maintains that difficulties in intergroup and interethnic communication arise from a wide variety of misunderstood cues, conventions, and organizing features of discourse.[55] Ways of speaking, complicated by sociocultural expectations and assumptions that are likely unconscious, make cross-cultural communication quite a complex and even perplexing act even between two fluent speakers. This leads to the hypothesis that ESL teachers, faced with a variety of cultures to "know," will often misunderstand, and be misunderstood by, students, even when the communication message seems clear on the surface. This has been reported by ESL teachers,[56] and is also supported by studies of nonverbal behaviour.[57] Because ESL teachers are working through language to teach language and culture, sociolinguistic theory would lead us to expect many misunderstandings in communication between teachers and learners. Indeed, such communication failures may shape ESL teachers' perceptions of their role in the very difficult and delicate task of teaching culture.

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[55] J. J. Gumperez, *Language and Social Identity.*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1982.

[56] See for example, L. W. L. Young, "Inscrutability Revisited" J. J. Gumperez, ed., *Language and Social Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press), 1982. and J. Richards, "Conversation" *TESOL Quarterly* 14 (4, 1978):413-432.

[57] See for example, E. T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Press), 1959.
Also, P. Collett "Meeting and Misunderstandings" in S. Bochner, ed., *Cutures in Contact: Studies in Cross-cultural interaction* (Oxford: Pergamon Press), 1982, pp. 81-91.

This review of the literature was intended to survey and discuss scholarly writing and research related to the research problem at hand. Although a number of related fields within the social sciences offer a perspective on the problem, what little has been written about ESL teachers and culture was generally found to focus upon a single teacher's experience, or on suggestions to promote cultural sharing within adult ESL classes. ESL teachers' intercultural role is an unstudied dimension of their work and one that is given little attention in ESL texts and materials. This study, which reports on a group of teachers' perceptions of that role, offers an opportunity to explore, document, and understand intercultural relationships as seen by practicing ESL teachers.

Chapter III

THE STUDY

This chapter details the research project. The approach taken in the interviews and the ethnographic techniques employed are explained. The pilot study and its function in the shaping of the main study, the research setting, and the informants are all examined in this chapter. Finally, I try to convey a sense of the research process and the raw data of the interviews in a short section on the research experience.

A. THE METHOD

This study is not an ethnography of the life of ESL instructors; it is an interview study that takes an ethnographic approach to a research question that demands an insider's perspective. Qualitative research traditionally seeks to describe and understand aspects of human experience. The purpose of this study is to describe a range of informants' perspectives of the intercultural aspects of their role as teachers of English to adults who are speakers of other languages, and members of other original cultures.

The study draws upon a form of interaction called ethnographic interviews that took place between the researcher and individual informant-instructors at the college. Ethnographic interviews do not present people with possible answers to questions posed, nor do they seek to measure attitudes and responses with a standardized survey instrument. In ethnographic interviews the social reality of the interview situation and the interaction between the researcher and the informant are important considerations for the subsequent analysis of what the informants say. Ethnographic interviews are termed 'reflexive' as opposed to 'standardized' because non-directive and open-ended questions that are not necessarily pre-planned are posed. The interview is structured by both the researcher and the informant.[58] Most importantly, the interviewer takes the part of an active, naive listener, formulating questions and comments based upon what the informant has previously said.

As Spradley points out, ethnographic interviews are distinguished from friendly conversations by their explicit purpose and their characteristic ethnographic explanations and questions.[59] The informants are told about the purpose of the interviews, and questions are explained as the interview goes along, with attention directed by the interviewer throughout the informants' descriptions of their activities and their use of language. The assumption here is that through descriptions of activities and structures and through contrast and comparison of elements described, the underlying meaning that activities have in the culture is expressed in the actor's own terms to the researcher who will uncover it through analysis. The informants' explanations of meaning are not ignored, but neither are they taken at face value. The common-sense explanation for and meaning of, cultural elements is part of the context within which the informants live, and the overall account related by an informant is seen as more than simply one perspective on that context. Each account is a part of the context and is at the same time shaped by it.

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[58] M. Hammersley and P. Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (London: Tavistock Publications), 1983 p. 113.
[59] J. Spradley, *The Ethnographic Interview* (New York: Holt, Reinehart and Winston), 1979 p. 59.

In ethnographic interviews, the researcher functions in some ways as the research 'instrument.' Researchers using ethnographic techniques often disclose their approach to the problem so that readers may evaluate the findings in view of the researcher's stated perspective. In my case, I expected to find diversity in the informants' intercultural role perceptions. I anticipated that some informants would claim the neutral, informative approach to cultural teaching so often described in textbooks, while other informants would likely see the cultural aspects of their work as more interactive or potentially problematic.

As an ESL teacher of adults myself, I benefitted from easy access to the setting, and ready acceptance by the informants. Still, Spradley notes that he would usually caution against undertaking the study of a familiar culture for two reasons. First, familiarity makes both the gathering and analysis of field data potentially more difficult because of the way we take our own cultural knowledge for granted. Second, if informants believe that a researcher should already know the answers to her questions, they are likely to become uncooperative or suspicious.[60] There were however, certain factors in this particular study that reduced the dangers of researcher enculturation.

The very nature of the problem allowed the informants, as unique and individual ESL teachers, to contribute their perceptions and describe their experiences without feeling that anyone else should know their insider's view. Many of the instructors work with a specialized clientele, or in only one kind of program, so that their definition of outsider was hoped to be quite broad. Some of the informants knew of me through my occasional work as practicum supervisor for student teachers. My publications, also known to some of the informants, are in the areas of needs analysis and functional language teaching and curricula, all of which are not explicitly related to intercultural learning. This foray into a "new interest" would, I hoped, lessen informant suspicions about my knowledge of their situation.

Although the thirty-five interviews were by no means standardized, there were some common elements in all of them. I asked the informants about the students in their classes, about the courses they are teaching, and about the language and cultural learning goals of those courses. Keeping the questions open-ended and based upon what I had been told by instructors in previous interviews, I asked the informants to tell me about the cultural aspects of what they do, and to give me examples from their current classes.

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[60] J. Spradley, *The Ethnographic Interview* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston), 1979 pp. 50-51.

I also asked all of the informants about their background in teaching, and their knowledge and experience with languages other than English and places other than Canada. In keeping with the reflective principles of ethnographic interviews, I sometimes voiced my interpretations or inferences for the informants' reactions.

The anticipation of differing perceptions of the ESL teacher's intercultural role among the informants and the existing organization of the ESL programs at the college led to the inclusion in the design of a sampling approach that would take these existing categories into account. Such a sampling strategy by category or type rather than by random selection is consistent with an approach to social science research for the generation of theory laid out in Glaser and Strauss' work on "grounded theory."[61] Their concept of "theoretical sampling" allows for informants to be selected as the research progresses, according to the researcher's assessment of the current state of the study, and his or her judgement on how best to develop it further. According to their model, this study would be described as one moving toward the development of substantive theory grounded in research on ESL teachers of adults.

In keeping with this approach to sampling, among the other notes and impressions recorded in my field diary, I kept track of the interviews and the characteristics of the informants. The categories used in the descriptions of the informants and in the thematic analysis emerged in the pilot study and were used to monitor the course of the field work. In this way, I kept a running tally of the number of informants from each program, their gender, and their self-defined cultural identity. I also kept a record of the role perceptions expressed by the individual informants for use as a supplement to the transcribed accounts.

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[61] B. Glaser and A. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co.), 1956.

Practical considerations in the study included recruiting informants, recording and collecting data, and the presentation of the researcher. For this study, normal procedure at the college was followed. After all necessary permission was obtained from directors and coordinators, individual instructors were informed about the study and invited to participate by letter (see Appendix A). This was then followed by personal contact with the reseacher in most cases at a regular staff meeting where the project was explained and potential informants were able to ask questions. Informants were told about the study and its focus on the personal experience of ESL teachers and their perspective on their work. Anonymity and confidentiality of statements were promised when the informants signed the written consent form (see Appendix B), as required by the university ethics committee.

In this kind of research, the informants are being asked to trust in the integrity and good intentions of the researcher. Rapport, mutual sympathy and trust need to be established in the initial stages of contact. The researcher made an effort to appear non-threatening through careful consideration of self-presentation. All instructors at the college have an office and at least one 'free' hour during their work day; by holding interviews in the informants' offices at times of their choosing, I hoped to heighten their sense of security and facilitate the establishment of rapport. As it happened, ten of the interviews took place in the faculty lounge section of the cafeteria, two were held in instructors' homes, and the remaining eighteen in the teachers' offices.

All but three of the interviews were audio-tape recorded. This freedom from taking verbatim notes allowed me to concentrate on actively listening to the informant's account, all the better to follow the informant's thinking and pose the most appropriate question at the most appropriate time. Note-taking was not eliminated, but centred on capturing other aspects of the interview, and on recording the researcher's impressions. Three of the informants did not want to be tape recorded. The accounts of their interviews were written up from notes taken during and immediately following the sessions.

B. THE PILOT INTERVIEWS

These interviews served three specific purposes in regard to the shaping of the major study. First and foremost, the pilot interviews were a testing ground for the interviewer and the interview. The faculty members' reaction to the study, the ease of obtaining cooperation, the content and course of the interviews, and the researcher's response to the experience of field work were all on trial. Second, the interviews provided the data for the formation of an initial analytic framework of categories and concepts to be pursued in the major field work period. Third, these interviews and information from less formal conversations with instructors and administrators were the basis for a decision as to whether or not the faculty and culture learning goals of the on-campus ESL program were sufficiently representative of the general purpose ESL at the college to justify limiting the general ESL instructors to be interviewed to those from this part-time program.

The pilot interviews were held between March 22 and April 3, 1985. One instructor was interviewed from each of five of the college's ESL programs; these included academic English, vocational English, part-time ESL, community English, and evening programs. The three latter programs are all general purpose ESL programs targeted at different markets of adult learners; one is conducted on campus, the other two are off-site programs.

The pilot interviews were longer than the interviews for the main study. I was not really sure at the beginning what the informants would be willing to talk about, or how they would talk about the cultural aspects of their relationships to their students. During the pilot interviews these concerns were answered by the informants. Their explanations and their accounts of their work with ESL learners led to the components of the analysis of role dimensions that follows in the next chapter. The pilot interviews were transcribed by hand, a slow and difficult process. This experience led to the realization that the project would be impractical unless the interviews were transcribed in a faster, more efficent way.

The pilot study served its purpose well. As a result of the pilot, it was decided that the three on-site ESL programs would be the research setting since there were a great number of instructors in the program, and the culture learning goals of the three programs did not appear to be greatly different. From a practical viewpoint, confining the project to the single setting of the campus proper made the field work less expensive and more convenient.

C. THE SETTING

The community college is a busy institution with modern physical facilities in a urban setting. The students range in age from the late teens to senior citizens. The building is quite new and well-cared for; there is little evidence of vandalism or graffiti. Students gather in the hallways with their friends, in the smoke-filled lounge areas, and in the cafeteria. As for the teachers, when they are not in class they are often found in their program's general resource area, in their offices, or in the faculty section of the cafeteria which also serves as the faculty lounge. The library and counselling area are both busy centres of activity.

Along with other types of courses, English language classes for adults are offered by the college throughout the year, on and off campus at various times during the day. Like many institutions that offer ESL instruction, the college has several separate programs aimed at different groups of learners. As noted above, instructors from three ESL programs that hold classes on the campus proper were interviewed for this project.

The three programs selected are representative of the three main types of ESL programming for adults. That is, general interest ESL, academic preparation ESL for those interested in further formal education, and vocational ESL for those requiring language education in preparation for work. As described in the college calendar, the general ESL program is for part-time learners who wish to up-grade their English communication and literacy skills so that they can function more effectively in the English-speaking community, or enter vocational, academic or technical post-secondary programs.[62] The vocational English program's declared purpose is to "give students enough English to enable them to find employment."[63] The academic English program is for students "at the post-advanced level of fluency" who are seeking high school completion or preparing to enter a post-secondary program where English is the medium of instruction.[64] According to the calendar, all of the courses

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[62] Community College *1985-1986 Calendar* p. 62.
[63] *Ibid.*

> . . . give practice in listening, speaking, reading and writing English. All programs provide orientation to Canadian life and culture, and prepare students for Canadian citizenship.

This cultural mandate of the programs is less explicitly acknowledged in the course curricula, and in descriptions of the course in college brochures.

D. THE INFORMANTS

I formally interviewed thirty-five instructors: five for the pilot study and thirty for the main study. All of the informants volunteered, and all volunteers who fit the sample criteria of regular employment in one of the three programs under study were interviewed.

Overall, the level of cooperation from the college's ESL faculty was very high. The project's focus on the cultural aspects of the teacher's role interested the instructors who came forward as informants. I asked several of the teachers who did not agree to be interviewed for their reasons, and most often the hour or so needed was given as the reason for their reluctance. In a few cases, when I said I was particularly interested in their perspective because of a unique characteristic, the teacher then agreed to be interviewed. The lone male visible minority member informant was recruited in this way.

There are certainly other reasons, besides a lack of time, that made teachers disinclined to become informants. I noticed that as the study progressed, and after I had been on campus every day for about six weeks, a number of previously reticent teachers came forward and offered to speak with me. This was due, I think, to my acceptance by the faculty in general. Had I had time and energy to spend many months in the field I might have had an opportunity to interview the entire campus ESL faculty. The last informants were less enthusiastic about their work and less satisfied with their jobs, but they had no less to say about how culture affected their teaching.

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[64] *Ibid.* pp. 62-63.

I followed the college's program groupings in recruiting the informants. This meant that I tried to obtain cooperation from instructors in the three programs more or less in proportion to the total number for that program, although this was not crucial because the study does not need nor claim to have a representative sample. Table I shows the number of informants from each of the three programs.

TABLE I

Number of Informants from Each Program

Academic ESL	Vocational ESL	General ESL
Informants=4	Informants=11	Informants=15

The academic ESL program included twelve instructors in the April, 1985 figures for the program, although vacations reduced the number of potential informants in the program to ten. Of these ten, four had complete interviews while one instructor's interview was interrupted and never completed. The data from this instructor's interview is not included in the study.

The vocational ESL program has thirty-four instructors on the April, 1985 faculty list for the college, but only twenty-six of those instructors were teaching at the time of the study. Of these twenty-six potential informants, eleven were interviewed. For the general ESL program the figures are forty-nine instructors on the faculty list as college employees, forty-four on the teaching scheduele, and fifteen interviewed for the study. In total for the main study, thirty instructors acted as informants out of a potential teaching faculty of eighty instructors in the three programs on the campus.

Table II shows the informants numbered in order of their interview categorized by age and gender.[65] Exactly half of the informants are in their thirties. The informants under thirty years old, T#9 and T#22, were twenty-nine and twenty-seven respectively, so over half of the informants are of the generation sometimes called 'baby boomers.'

The college's ESL programs went through a period of expansion in the 1970's and so it is not surprising that

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[65] Teachers 1-5 represent the five teachers in the pilot study. They are not included in the tables.

TABLE II

Informant's Age and Gender

T#	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-65	MALE	FEMALE
6		X				X	
7			X				X
8				X			X
9					X		X
10		X					X
11	X						X
12			X				X
13		X					X
14		X					X
15					X		X
16			X			X	
17		X					X
18		X				X	
19				X			X
20		X				X	
21			X				X
22	X						X
23				X		X	
24		X					X
25		X				X	
26		X					X
27		X					X
28		X					X
29		X					X
30		X					X
31			X				X
32				X			X
33					X		X
34			X			X	
35		X				X	
30	2	15	6	4	3	8	22

most of the informants were hired during that time and are now in their thirties. Until that era, ESL instruction for adults was not organized in such a way as to provide permanent full-time employment for teachers. All of the teachers over fifty years old started their careers in the school system. When the adult ESL courses were first organized, these experienced teachers were hired to launch the programs.

Twenty-two of the thirty informants were female. Although, as stated earlier, the sampling was not intended to be statistically representative, this proportion of a little more than one third of the instructors being male is generally in keeping with the male/female ratio of the overall faculty.

Table III presents the information about the informants' backgrounds and relates their self-characterization of their cultural identity. This information is of interest because of the importance of the teachers' cultural perspectives and cross-cultural experience to their perception of their teaching role.

Thirteen of the teachers interviewed do not have English as their mother tongue. Among this thirteen are the five visible minority member informants who said that their students always ask where they are from, and what languages they speak. Two of the five visible minority member informants were born in North America of immigrant parents and learned English as young children. Their students, they

TABLE III

Informant's Background and Cultural Identification

T#	English L1	English L2+	Born in Canada	Visible Minority Member	CANADIAN* Mono-cultural	CANADIAN* Bicultural	Inter-nation-alist
6	X		X				X
7	X		X		X		
8		X	X		X		
9	X		X		X		
10		X	X	X		X	
11	X						X
12	X		X		X		
13	X		X				X
14	X		X				X
15	X		X		X		
16		X					X
17	X						X
18	X		X				X
19		X	X			X	
20	X		X		X		
21		X					X
22		X	X		X		
23		X	X		X		
24	X		X			X	
25		X	X				X
26	X		X		X		
27		X		X		X	
28	X						X
29	X		X			X	
30		X		X			X?
31		X	X	X		X	
32		X		X		X	
33	X		X		X		
34		X		X		X	
35	X				X		
30	17	13	20	5	11	8	11

* Self-defined members of the Canadian mainstream.

agreed, assumed that these non-white teachers have had experience as ESL learners. Three other informants among the thirteen for whom English was an additional language said they usually told students about their experiences as children in immigrant homes; two of the three pointed out that their last names were obviously not 'anglo' and that students usually asked them about their family backgrounds. These eight informants all said that their family background and second language experience as children was a source of their empathy for their adult students. For example, when I asked T#32 what attracted her to teaching ESL to adults, she said:

> It's just that I understood what it would be like not to know the language in the world you're living in, because my parents never spoke the language and in particular my mother. And I knew how much actual non-living was going on. And I would certainly hate to see anyone living that kind of life.
> (T#32 p.30)

The other informants in this group simply said that they understood the problems and perhaps even the mentality of their students because of their family background.

The remaining five informants of non-English mother tongue said they do not tell their students that English is not their first language. Born in Canada, they all learned English as children, and most said they seldom use or have limited facility in their parents' language. Interestingly, they do tell their students about their efforts, successful or not, to learn languages as adults. Similarly, they recount their experiences travelling or working abroad and the language or cultural dilemmas they faced there.

The last three columns of table III indicate the teachers' self-declared cultural identity. Nineteen of the thirty informants said that they think of themselves as mainstream Canadians. Of those informants, eight said that they were bicultural and also bilingual, while the other eleven were monocultural. These are examples of some of the comments that led to informants being placed in the mainstream category:

> T#7: I'd say I'm definitely mainstream Canadian.
>
> T#8: I'm not bicultural, that's a new idea. When I was growing up, we didn't have 'bicultural.' I look on my background as where I come from, but where I am is Canadian.(Mainstream?) Yes, I think so.
>
> T#9: Yes, exactly. I'm mainstream, average.
>
> T#10: I'm Chinese-Canadian. Half-half. Some Chinese family values, but basically Canadian. There are no conflicts in that. I think it's a gain.
>
> T#24: I suppose I'm average for my group. Mainstream Canadian, yes.
>
> T#26: Yeah, I'd have to say I'm mainstream, but I don't really like the label.
>
> T#27: I'm bicultural - yes. Mainstream Canadian, but in a way I'm between two cultures.
>
> T#32: Mainstream? Yeah, I guess so. . . I'm beginning to think I'm a banana. Sometimes I don't want to, and sometimes I do want to. It doesn't make much difference; it doesn't bother me any more.

The banana T#32 refers to is a metaphor that expresses the ambivalence of a yellow-skinned person who lives among and identifies with a predominately white society.

Like four of the five visible minority member informants, T#32 characterized herself as a bicultural mainstream Canadian. These instructors, then, also identify with the mainstream society, and see a place for themselves within it. T#32's remark raises the question of the nature of that society, specifically if the 'banana' is a inevitable outcome of acculturation. T#32 said she'd learned the term from her children. The other visible minority members mentioned a feeling of having a dual identity; T#34 said that he was not "racially" Canadian. The fifth visible minority member informant, an instructor who has lived in Canada for ten years and is married to a Canadian, said she still considered herself a citizen of her home country, and her primary identification was with her culture of origin.

Teachers #19 and #29 like T#26, reluctantly admitted to being mainstream because they didn't like the label. T#19 said she was "mainstream but not average," while T#29 said she was mainstream Canadian and bicultural, but liked to think she had a little bit of a global perspective. "I'm not rah-rah Canadian," she said. It is the 'global perspective' that distinguishes the "internationalists" who, unlike T#29, reject altogether the idea that they are mainstream Canadians.

This declaration of a foreign allegiance makes T#30 an anomaly in the last column and that is why a question mark is placed beside her marker in table III. The last column of the table with the heading "Internationalist" is for those informants who stated that their world view was larger than that of mainstream Canadians. They felt that they were "citizens of the world" despite their Canadian passports, and they rejected the idea that they were part of the mainstream of Canadian society. Here are some examples of statements by teachers in the internationalist category:

> T#13: I see myself as an international person. I don't think I'm a typical Canadian. I see myself very much as a person with many views, with many different values that come from different cultures, and with many homes.
>
> T#14: I'm sort of a chameleon. . . I adjust easily to other cultures and really get into them. I feel personally that I'm very tolerant of people from other cultures, and it always surprises me when I see other Canadians making racist remarks about people. I wouldn't say that I was mainstream.
>
> T#16: I'm sort of an internationalist. I see your citizenship as a kind of property you have; it's no big deal.
>
> T#17: I've always been around other cultures. I'm not nationalistic about Canada. . . I'm a citizen of the world first.
>
> T#18: Yeah, I'm Canadian, but I'm not mainstream. I'd like to live abroad, but I like the possibilities for me here, so I'm sort of stuck.
>
> T#21: I'd say I'm multicultural. I have a more rounded perspective than most Canadians. Many Canadians take Canada for granted and never examine it at all.
>
> T#25: I think most people in the world are very similar. . . I think Canadians are really international. Because, what is it? Over half of the population of Canada is new.

This group includes four instructors born in Canada, two who hold dual citizenship because they were born outside Canada to Canadian parents, two who immigrated to Canada as children, and T#30 whose case was mentioned above. It is not difficult to imagine that the informants born outside Canada may feel they have a more international perspective, and are less inclined to unquestioningly accept Canadian societal values than is the average Canadian.

One of the informants in this group offered his ideas on why the instructors at the college would deny being part of the mainstream of Canadian society.

> T#6: You're not going to find (mainstream people). . . I think the problem with people that travel, you know, the reason why people travel and leave their country and go elsewhere is that they're not mainstream. And they're in search of other things and other cultures and they don't want to be mainstream because mainstream means middle class and middle class means, content.
> Little homes, you know, little boxes, little plateaus and I think people of my generation will do anything to reject that. It's sort of pre-hippie or post or both, without ever being a hippie, we just are. And I think that's why. You may fall right in the middle of a middle class job, and the mortgage and all that bullshit.
>
> TD: This is a reasonably middle class job.[66]
>
> T#6: Yes. Yes, the job. But you may approach it differently.
> (T#6 p.35-36)

What T#6 is saying here is that the ESL instructors, as a generation, challenge Canadian mainstream middle class values both through their work and their lifestyles. He raises the stereotypic image of a mainstream person as someone who has sold out his dreams and idealism for middle class materialism and similar societal definitions of success. For T#8, and for his peers if he is correct, this is a negative stereotype, and its rejection contributes to the 'internationalists' rejection of the mainstream Canadian label.

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[66] Twenty-three of these thirty informants have regular permanent contracts which have a salary range of between $26,000 and $42,000 annually. While the college administrator indicated in supplying these figures that most regular contract instructors earn, "around $30,000," fifteen of these informants have more than ten years experience with the college and are likely in the highest salary range. The seven informants who work full-time sessional contracts are paid according to the number of teaching days covered by the contract at the rate of $126 to $205 per six hour teaching day.

T#6 is certainly correct that the informants with the 'internationalist' perspective are very well travelled. This group includes informants who spent years living, and sometimes teaching English in Asia, Africa, Europe, South America, the Middle East or India. They also speak one or more languages that they learned in their travels: Japanese, Arabic, Indonesian, Danish, Dutch, Hindi, and Thai are examples of some of the languages they named.

Compared to the informants in the 'mainstream' category, the 'internationalist' perspective informants are distinguishable by their time spent actually living outside Canada. All of the informants in the monocultural mainstream group said that they have travelled only on vacation. Although this group includes people who have learned second languages as adults, they most often learned French at university. T#35 is the exception among those who called themselves monocultural mainstream Canadians. T#35 studied oriental languages at university and taught English in Japan.

The bicultural mainstream group of eight informants is more complex to analyse on this point, because it contains people who are immigrants to Canada. Two of the informants in this group have lived outside Canada for an extended period of time, much like those informants in the 'internationalist' group. They are included in the 'mainstream' group because they did not reject that label as the 'internationalist' did. Interestingly, one of these two mainstream informants who has lived abroad, T#31, is in her late forties and outside the 'sixties generation described above by T#6 as rejecting the mainstream label. T#29, the other bicultural mainstreamer, did say that she had a "more global perspective" than the average Canadian, but she did not disassociate herself from the mainstream. T#29 described herself as bicultural, Jewish Canadian; she lived in Israel for two years where she learned Hebrew. Although this informant fits in with the internationalists in some ways, the fact that she did not reject the mainstream label leaves her in that category, although I see her as a sort of a link between that group and the internationalists.

E. THE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

In the interviews, the informants did not usually separate their cultural role into the dimensions that I have used for this analysis. They did not think of their interactions with students in that way. For the teachers, this is their everyday unexamined life; they see their role in relation to their students as it is expressed in their actions and through their reactions. It has a dynamic and immediate reality for them.

When asked how culture figures in their work with ESL learners, the informants spoke about what the learners needed to know, or how a particular class or group of students had reacted to a situation or topic. They did not usually intellectualize their experience and often said that they had never thought about these issues before. They handled them 'naturally' according to what seemed appropriate to them at the time. As an example of raw data and a more extended train of thought than the short quotations convey I offer this page from T#8's interview. She teaches beginning and intermediate students in the vocational English program.

> TD: And so do you explain those sorts of things?
>
> T#8: What you have to do is say that there is a system. This is how it works and this is why it's that way. But within that we have to have a degree of flexibility. . .
>
> TD: But I'm starting to feel in a way that this is something that ESL teachers sort of know that other people don't know. Because you don't think about your culture and how it runs and how your society's organized unless you have to explain it to somebody.
>
> T#8: No. Like I've been doing this since 1968 and I'm still taken aback by how many things are cultural. I don't think we ever realize the depth of it. I'll never forget having a group of students from Afghanistan and we got to talking about colours and these were all men so I asked them what their favorite colour was. And their favorite colour was pink. So, you know, colours are cultural.
>
> TD: And do they associate that with something?
>
> T#8: No ,no. That's their favorite, you know. The second one they liked was orange.

> TD: Which are quite feminine choices in our culture.
>
> T#8 That's right. That's right. I mean culture is just everything. It's everything. There is just no way you can separate language from culture.
>
> TD: So even in everything that you're planning you would think of it as being cultural?
>
> T#8: Yeah. I think maybe now I do that sort of unconsciously but I think that maybe at first I might have thought, OK this is cultural. But the whole question of what's polite. And you know, burping. We sometimes have a real problem in the class and we have to speak to some students and say, "We're funny people, but that's one of the things we don't do."
> (T#8 pp. 12-13)

In this one page, T#8 offers her insight into the teaching of culture with her statement about realizing that there is a system, and similarly summarizes her perspective on the language and culture question with her blanket statement that "culture is everything." Following my interpretation inspired by her remarks, she gives an example from her experience of culture in her ESL classroom. This incident is related because it was one by which she formed her belief that language and culture are inseparable. When asked if this affects her planning, she gives the most common response that although she is aware of culture, this is only unconsciously brought to bear upon her planning. This slice of T#8's interview ends with an insight into how she interprets Canadian practices to her students, and shows the tone and tact with which she broaches a potentially sensitive topic.

All of the interviews have the different role dimensions interwoven in this way. This does not mean to say that the dimensions are imposed or fabricated by the analysis but rather that they are isolated by the analytic process. The real challenge of the field experience was not to obtain the cooperation of informants nor to get those informants to speak about their perspective on their intercultural roles, but rather to allow the informants to talk about their work in their own way and in their own words. To structure the interview so that it took place within the promised time, and yet not within pre-existing expectations of response, to listen to the informants and try to understand them, that was the challenge of the field work experience.

Chapter IV

DIMENSIONS OF THE TEACHERS' PERCEIVED ROLE

This chapter presents the analysis of the interview data. The thirty informants' accounts were examined for their perceived roles, and their perceived functions as ESL teachers drawn by their work into cultural and intercultural teaching. In keeping with the study's central question and my intention to explore the range of role perceptions described by the informants at the college, this chapter reports on four cultural dimensions of the adult ESL teacher's role.

Three of these role dimensions, 'being an example,' 'explaining and interpreting,' and 'teaching interculturally,' concern public aspects of the ESL teacher's work whether in front of the entire class or with a group of learners. The fourth role dimension, 'listening and helping - being a friend,' is negotiated between the instructor and individual students, usually in private conversations. Although no attempt is made to define culture, the informants' notions of what is cultural in their work, and their perspectives on the cultural aspects of language teaching are presented with examples. To provide the background for the examination of the role dimensions, the chapter begins with a discussion of what the informants said about culture in language teaching.

1. CULTURE IN ESL

> The big problem is what does culture mean? And to a large extent I think language is culture.
> (T#18 p.4)

Overwhelmingly, the instructors believe that language and culture are inseparable. Language, however, is their first responsibility: they organize their lessons and courses around language elements. T#16 voiced a typical perspective in his explanation of how he thinks about culture when planning for his classes:

> TD: So, when you plan out what you do with them, do you ever plan things that you think of as cultural things?
>
> T#16: Not really. I don't specifically sit down and say, "Hmm, this is cultural." I don't see it as cultural. Like I might do something about complaining. Today we started to get into that. You know, I could say that's a cultural thing because a lot of cultures maybe don't complain the same way we do and maybe, if you were to ask me to I could rationalize this. I could make it sound really good, that this was a cultural aspect in my lesson if I'm supposed to have that in there, but I don't see it as that when I'm starting it.
> (T#16 p. 5)

For the instructors, the cultures associated with English are so embedded and reflected in the language that they had difficulty separating the two for discussion. T#8, quoted at the end of chapter III, makes this same point, as do several informants quoted in this chapter. Even so, cultural understanding was brought up again and again as necessary for understanding the language at more than a surface level. T#30 for example said:

> Well, obviously I think they're very close and without understanding the cultural aspect of the language I think it's almost impossible for one to say,

> well, I understand the language.
> (T#30 p. 11)

This particular informant speaks from personal experience since she learned English as a foreign language and found the literature difficult to understand until she learned more about the related cultures.

Teachers of more advanced learners most often raised the point that students, particularly those who saw English as an academic subject, could learn English words and English grammar without really understanding English meanings. T#35 asserted that he thought English was a "living, vital force which is very heavily related to the culture surrounding it" and said that a failure to accept that limited the depth of learning for some students (T#35 pp. 17-18). He teaches in the general ESL course at the advanced level where such students are likely to run into difficulties when grammar alone will not carry them through the course.

T#18's comments, quoted above, were representative of the thoughts expressed by most of the informants. He was very strong in his view that you could not really learn a language without trying to understand the people and learn about their way of life. At the time of the interview, he was studying a foreign language, and in addition to his classes he was going out of his way to listen to the music and eat the food of the people who speak that language. He added these thoughts about cultural awareness and language teaching:

> I think you can't escape culture, though there are a few teachers who try, who are not necessarily people highest in my estimation. They are in fact teachers who themselves I don't think should be teaching the language because they don't have any clue other than just the words. No, I think literally everything we do is cultural from personality, humour, everything. (T#18 p. 4)

There was considerable consensus about what was cultural, and what made up 'culture' in these teachers' classes. There was also a general statement that when they were 'teaching culture' it was generally informal, unplanned, and in response to something that happened or was said in class. "It just comes up," was a statement I heard many times. Appendix C lists the elements of culture named by the informants. Many said that culture and language were the same, and they named "everything" as cultural for ESL learners. Other informants suggested that information about life in Canada and societal values, organizing principles, and underlying assumptions make up the cultural content of ESL classes. Not every teacher specified the same elements, but there was a great deal of overlap in the things they mentioned.

For almost all of the teachers, cultural discussions or questions about the cultural meaning of something are daily occurrences. As T#16 explained, the cultural aspects of a language element or of a situation are not usually considered by the instructors before the lesson because they do not think of their work in that way. T#24 used almost exactly the same words and went on to explain how culture figures in classroom discussions. I was interested in the informants' use of the term "discussion" to describe some of the interaction in their classes. As T#24 describes here, many discussions about culture feature the instructor speaking with the class, where a few students offer comments and make interpretations. In this quote T#24 is talking about what happened when her class worked around a housing theme.

> T#24: The cultural things would come out. Living arrangements would come out. The idea of students living together, maybe ten in a house, or that sort of thing. It just really floors a lot of students. The idea of living together and not being married is, you know, hard for some of them to accept.
>
> TD: How would that come up?
>
> T#24: I would bring it up. And it depends how streetwise the students are, sometimes they will make a comment, because they like to show what they know. So they'll say, "Oh yes in Canada this happens." And the whole class, if it's something funny, they will all giggle about it. . . . Anyway, then I pick it up and say, "yeah, in Canada, do you think that happens?" And someone might say, "oh no" or "oh yes," or whatever. And we'll talk about maybe an age group, or how often or what percentage or who they think would do that. And we'll get their perception and then they'll ask for mine.
> (T#24 pp. 3-4)

This extract from T#24's interview illustrates one way that culture "comes up" in the class. This quotation once again shows the close relationship between language and culture, and how language is consciously planned and taught while cultural knowledge is dealt with as seems necessary. In her example, T#24 touches upon the common organizing principle of language structures presented within a thematic unit, in this case housing. Aside from the information content of the unit which would include such things as the names for different kinds of dwellings, how to read a housing advertisement, ways to ask for information about housing, the discussion of housing in Canada led the class into the values and attitudes associated with living arrangements.[67]

This discussion of housing, although not consciously planned by T#24, took place because of her willingness to listen to the students. She even went so far as to provoke a reaction in the students by posing questions or bringing up subjects which might have made the students uncomfortable. This is a teaching style sometimes found in other disciplines where a teacher may ask questions or push students to extend their perspective on a problem or otherwise intellectually challenge the students. The obvious difference here is that the concepts involved are overtly cultural ones and as such may be part of deeply held beliefs. This aspect of the teacher's role is taken up for further discussion in the 'explaining and interpreting' section of this chapter.

When similarly asked if she considered cultural understanding when planning for her beginners' level general ESL class, T#32 said that she did not. "That would be too contrived," she said, while she preferred to be spontaneous and take advantage of questions as they arose. She conceded that she does anticipate that a topic might be of interest from her students' varied cultural viewpoints and went on to say:

---

[67] This unit on housing described by T#24 follows the framework set out by B.A. Mohan in *Language and Content* (Reading: Addison-Wesley) 1986; see for example Figure 2.5, p. 35. This way of structuring the topic information on housing, particularly in regard to the concepts and classification, principles, and evaluation of the background information allows for the exploration of the cultural significance of these aspects of housing.

> T#32: No, I don't think I would deliberately say that today I'm going to teach this [something cultural].
>
> TD: In the same way that you would say, "today I'm going to teach past perfect." [Yeah] Cause you do say that, right?
>
> T#32: Yes, I would say, "today definitely we'll be doing this," as far as the curriculum, the academic side is . . . But on the other hand, "Today I will teach them not to spit? Today I will teach them to use a Kleenex? Today I will teach them not to speak so loud on the buses?" I don't think I would sit down and do it like that.
>
> TD: But you do mention those things?
>
> T#32: Yes, definitely. Like in my exercises and situations for the modals I create things like what do you do when someone is speaking in a very loud foreign language on the bus. You know, that is cultural, but yet I'm not trying to teach culture. (T#32 pp. 8-9)

T#32 is "not trying to teach culture" because she sees that job as outside her role. She defined her job as that of a language teacher and declared that language and culture are closely related. Her denial of having any intention of teaching culture calls into question, for T#32 and perhaps others, that teaching culture may be equated with efforts toward assimilating the students. Instead she seems to allow for the students to learn new behaviours and even expects them to change as a result of her talks. She just does not call this teaching culture.

At the beginning of this section on culture and ESL, T#18 posed the question, "What does culture mean?", and went on to say that for him, culture and language are inseparable. Many informants spoke of culture as part of the context of their language lessons, much in the way T#24 above sees cultural examination coming out of her unit on housing. Some teachers said that culture came into their classrooms most obviously through their classes' on-going interest in current events. Some classes listen to the radio news together or take turns presenting a news story. These reports often lead to questions about a Canadian practice, or Canada's part in an event, or people's reactions to a story. By taking a news story as the content of a language lesson, and being open to questions or remarks that are not strictly about the language involved, teachers allow for cultural insights to be aired along with news facts and opinions about those facts. From this situation, the teacher may come to see 'culture' in her ESL class as coming from the news, although it would more accurately be described as arising from the students' and from the teacher's reactions to, and interpretations of, the news.

Teachers of courses that involve writing or reading see the cultural discussions or interests of their classes as coming out of the readings or showing up in the students' compositions. Like the news broadcasts, the readings or the compositions themselves are not the source of culture but rather the conduit. While the teachers said that the culture is in the readings, or covered in writing assignments, they mean that the class comes to talk about cultural issues as a result of those other activities. Culture may come up in readings, but it is a good deal more than the readings.

T#7 spoke of accepted behaviour for yawning, nose blowing, eating, spitting and the like as cultural, and as an area where students often differ from their Canadian teachers. I asked her if polite behaviours are addressed in the curriculum:

> T#7: No, it's just one of those things that are inferred. They can see sometimes that some things bother me. They can see it and they understand that I represent Canadians, and that this bothers Canadians, but what they can't figure out is why it should bother us. There's no particular motivation to change it because they're used to doing that particular thing, whatever it is.
> There are a number of things along that line [like spitting], and when I see something like that I tend to frown just to let them know without saying anything that it bothers me. And I can just hear them thinking, "That bothers her. I wonder why it bothers her, isn't it strange that it bothers her. Only she's like all other Canadians, it bothers them. It certainly doesn't bother us. It's weird."
>
> TD: Does anything like that ever get voiced?
>
> T#7: Well sometimes they'll say, "I know Canadians don't like that." That's about the only thing. They just notice the difference.
> (T#7 p. 14)

T#7 said that the students infer that Canadians are bothered by some behaviours, but that they do not really seem to alter the behaviour. So while the students draw inferences about Canadians from her unspoken reaction to them, she does not try to change the students' behaviour directly to make it conform to that of Canadians, nor does she explicitly tell the students what in fact Canadians do in that situation. She said she does not teach polite behaviour although by her own account it would seem that she does teach it through non-verbal behaviour which can carry a powerful message.

What then is 'culture' for these ESL teachers? They use the term in the ordinary way to refer to a way of life for a group of people, with emphasis on social structures and practices. Certainly this is what they mean when they refer to Canadian or North American culture. Because culture becomes an issue when cultural differences draw students' attention or interfere with understanding, the teachers tend to focus on cultural differences. When they say, "It was cultural," they mean that a conflict of understanding arose in regard to a cultural concept. Practices that are specifically Canadian or North American or even Western are also part of what is cultural for the teachers, as is apparent from their description of what belongs to the realm of culture.

The rest of this chapter presents the four role dimensions described to me by the informants. Their perspective on the teaching of culture, and on what is appropriate for an ESL teacher of adult students to do to facilitate the students' understanding of Canadian cultural practices are organized in the analysis around four role dimensions. I have called these four dimensions 'being an example,' 'explaining and interpreting,' 'teaching interculturally,' and 'listening and helping - being a friend.' These dimensions of the informants' perceived role are described in that order, moving from the role dimension with the least personal involvement with students to the one with the greatest personal involvement.

A. BEING AN EXAMPLE

> I think they're not looking so much at me as at the picture I'm representing . . . So that's why I would answer more things than I would otherwise, because I think they have limited contacts.
> (T#7 pp. 4-5)

Over and over again, the informants told me that their students know few, if any, people outside their particular ethnic community. This means that the ESL teacher, especially for beginners or newcomers, comes to represent Canadians in general. This notion of the teacher as a model or example of a Canadian person was a role dimension reported on by all but two of the informants in the study.

In the vocational English program, the students are often new to Vancouver and just beginning to learn English. As T#8 explains:

> T#8: I'm their first contact with Canada on a, sort of on an extended basis.
>
> TD: Oh, because these students are so new?
>
> T#8: That's right. Like we've often had people who have been here two months and any contacts they've had with Canadians before have probably been in an official capacity.
>
> TD: Ah, like the immigration officer or . . .
>
> T#8: That's right. So I'm their first contact then with an ordinary Canadian, if they think of me that

> way.
> (T#8 pp. 18-19)

In the above quotation, it seems T#8 is referring to those Canadians outside the student's ethnic community. Newcomers are often helped in settlement by ex-countrymen or relatives familiar with Canada and likely with some command of English. These people may, of course, be native or naturalized Canadians.

For most teachers, being a model or example just came with the job; it was not something they had set out to do:

> TD: Well then, do you think of yourself as, like a role model of a Canadian person?
>
> T#14: In some ways. Yes, I think so. But I don't try to do anything either. I just be myself. I know I never - but I definitely think I am, because I go to another country and study something - I've been in a class. You look, I mean that person is there. You're watching them all the time and you're taking in all kinds of things. Yeah, I think you are, but I don't think you do anything different because of that.
> (T#14 p. 26)

Teacher #7 was one of many who felt being an example did bring responsibilities. Her comments at the beginning of this section were prompted by some recent questions about her family finances. Others also said they were conscious of being a role model and tried to set an example through their actions. One vocational English instructor joked that because she knows students are going to ask personal questions and she could never lie to them, she is forced to lead as clean a life as possible.

Two contrasting remarks regarding the teacher as example illustrate the importance of the teacher's identity to her perspective. The following quotes are from a pair of teachers in the general ESL program where the student population at the time of the interviews was about 70% ethnic Chinese. T#26, a white, Canadian-born woman in her thirties who first said that she thought students did see her as a role model or as an example, later qualified her comment saying:

> Well, I think, I shouldn't put people in groups, but most of the Chinese students, I don't think they want to, they don't need a role, or they don't want a role model. They are going to keep their own culture and just learn English as sort of a sideline, but keep on doing all the things that they've been doing all along. They don't seem to want to change. I've seen more, just some students want to become more Canadianized, Westernized, or whatever you want to call it.
> (T#26, p. 28)

T#26 traced this impression to her students' reaction to her lifestyle. She is a single self-supporting woman who lives alone and she felt that the Chinese students saw that as a curiosity rather than as something to emulate or even accept.

T#32 is ethnically Chinese. Born in North America, she characterized herself as bilingual and bicultural, with a foot in both the world of unilingual Cantonese speaking immigrants like her parents, and in mainstream North American culture. Her Chinese students, she said, always erroneously assume that she is from Hong Kong. She brought up the image of role model as a cultural dimension of the teacher's role. I asked her to elaborate on her remark.

> TD: When you said you thought you were a role model, what were you thinking of?

> T#32: What was I thinking of, role model? I think in a way, ah, it surprises them that to all outward appearances I'm one of them sort of thing, and yet I'm here being able to teach them the language they want to learn. And I think just by my being in the classroom, I think, I hope that it would just rub off on them that some day they could do the same thing. [Uhm hum] And that I'm accepted you know, by every one of my colleagues.
> (T#32 pp.16-17)

This sentiment was voiced by the four other visible minority member teachers, although the youngest, T#10 said she was not really comfortable as an ethnic role model.

Many instructors felt the role of example Canadian brought further responsibilities. These include down-playing the teacher's authority, making the students aware of the range of behaviours, opinions and customs reflected in Canadian society so that they do not think one teacher's way is the only way, and generally trying not to influence the students. The reasoning behind this need to moderate the teacher's influence was repeated by many informants. They said that each instructor is an individual and likely not representative of Canadians in general.

> T#24: I think with any class, there are things that come up where the teacher is their handle on the culture, and their interpreter. Uhm, the trouble is if you give them a point of view that is an extreme minority point of view and give them a false impression that that is the way everything is.
>
> TD: Do you think that happens?
>
> T#24: Sure it happens. It has to happen. You know, because we, well especially the group, the people that you've met here. I don't know how normal a bunch we are, really?
> (T#24 p. 8)

With the range of generational, regional, socio-economic, and yes, cultural factors that influence Canadian 'norms' of behaviour, the teachers said that they did not really want to be example Canadians although it could not entirely be avoided. As T#21 put it,"We have a frightening responsibility to not influence the students." T#13 suggested that one of the reasons she invited native speakers to her class was to expand the students' acquaintance with ordinary Canadians outside their own groups, to expose them to other people. T#12 reported that she cautions students to be aware of cultural diversity:

> And so I'd say, just because the people around you are doing something, and they are Canadians, doesn't mean to say that it's necessarily English Canadian, and it doesn't have to be.
> (T#12 p. 21)

Several teachers cited exactly why they were not typical Canadians. Being single, or being more aware, more tolerant than the norm was often given as a disqualifying factor, especially among those who rejected the mainstream Canadian label. T#6 is one of those who said he is not a good 'yardstick' for students to use to try to understand Canadians.

> I think they quickly learn that I am not their norm. I think they quickly learn that not all Canadians are like me and that I'm not that satisfied with our system and our structures, that I think there are some things that have to be changed. And I think I make that readily apparent to them when we talk about things like discrimination. ...So I guess in the end they may see me as slightly radical and that, you know, they're not used to that.
> (T#6 p. 18)

Two teachers were ambivalent or unaware of the model dimension to the teacher's role and said they had no impression about whether or not students saw them as examples of Canadians. T#24 said:

> I never thought about that. I quess I don't know how representative they think I am of the culture. And if I am a role model, I don't feel particularly guilty or innocent one way or the other.
> (T#24 p. 21)

She later suggested that this was an unfair question since a teacher's perceptions of how the students see her might be off-target. For the study however, off-target or not, it is the teacher's notion that is of interest.

The other teacher who rejected the modelling dimension of the teacher's role, T#15, considers culture to be a non-issue in the classroom. She said that she had probably discouraged students from seeing her that way by remaining impersonal and keeping her distance. She also remarked that there was likely more of this perception with lower level students, while she usually worked with advanced learners.

It seems fair to comment that all teachers, as authority figures, are role models. From the accounts of these informants, it would seem that each ESL teacher functions as an example of his or her culture. In the situation under study, these teachers feel that their students look to them as example Canadians, and that students generalize from their observations and interactions with their teachers to form expectations about other Canadians. This function is meaningful to the teachers, and seems to be one to which they attach importance.

B. EXPLAINING AND INTERPRETING

> If there's such thing as teaching culture, that'll probably be the most of it, the largest part of it. (T#34 p. 11)

As an expert speaker of the language and someone with a technical understanding of its workings, the teacher is in a position to guide the learners through the complexities of English grammar and vocabulary. Similarly, as a member of the associated culture, the teacher takes the lead in demystifying English Canadian culture for the students in her classes.

This expertise in interpreting or explaining aspects of English Canadian culture is a feature that distinguishes between an ESL teacher and a regular English teacher or a traditional grammarian. Not surprisingly, all of the teachers explain and interpret cultural significance and practices to their students. Even T#15, who felt culture was not an issue and who was unaware of the learners' cultural perspectives as a factor in her classroom, said that she has to explain and give reasons for some Canadian practices. She specifically mentioned classroom behaviour, standards and expectations for homework (T#15 p. 7). Other teachers of the advanced level courses in the general ESL program also specified the explanation of unfamiliar vocabulary as an area that often leads them into 'cultural' discussions.

This function of interpreting English Canadian society and its often difficult-to-characterize cultural features requires the ESL instructor to be more aware of their own culture than most people. In order to be able to explain a cultural value or practice which is almost by definition understood only tacitly by a cultural group, the ESL teacher must know her culture from the inside and from the outside. That is, she must have both the unconscious knowledge of a group member and the conscious understanding of one who has analysed or at least considered the cultural practice from an outsider's point of view.

If this is true, then being an ESL teacher who engages in interpretations of her culture, or even tries to explain the most banal of cultural understandings to students, may lead to necessary self-questioning in the teachers.

Certainly adult ESL students are well suited to question Canadian mainstream culture and to provide the teachers with outsider perspectives. As reported in chapter 3, some informants felt they were less ethnocentric than other people. Most informants said that they had learned a great deal about the original cultures of their students. Many said they thought they had changed, or grown with the job. Interpreting Canadian cultural practices for ESL learners and taking an interest in the students' cultures may be a part of the source of that growth.

The instances when the teachers step into the role of interpreting or explaining aspects of Canadian life arise spontaneously from the students' reactions to and questions about the topic, linguistic or situational, under consideration. They told me that it "just comes up" or that they respond to the looks of surprise. T#28 describes how this works in her current intensive reading class:

> It happens all the time. They'll pick up on something, I'll see the question marks over their heads, you know? Sometimes it takes me a while to understand that there's the cultural impact here. I proceed to explain to them what it is, you know? And I'll often ask them if they have some kind of counterpart in their culture. I always ask them actually because I'm interested also in their culture. And they love teaching. They love the interchange and so we do that.
> (T#28 p. 6)

Like all but one other instructor, T#28 characterized these occasions when cultural insights are exchanged as spontaneous and unplanned. However, she also said that she knows from experience which readings or which concepts will provoke the most discussion and will therefore need more class time (T#28 pp. 9-10). So, while the individual instances and students' comments are spontaneous, the need for an interpretation may be anticipated.

The teachers' response is also unplanned and spontaneous, although likely in keeping with their personality and style. T#28 confessed she is a "bit of a ham," and said she usually acts out things humourously to make her point. T#35, the exception to the overwhelming assertion that cultural aspects of language are not planned into lessons, says that cultural understanding is part of his planning. T#35 has developed materials and planned lessons around various experiences common to life in Canada in which cultural learning is considered ahead of the language elements involved.

T#31 had experience living in an Asian country before taking up her job at the college. Here is a portion of her account of the explaining that she does in her class:

> TD: What would you say are some of the cultural aspects of what you're doing with your students?
>
> T#31: There's a lot of explaining how things fit in culturally and trying to figure that out. And of course a lot of the time I know how it looks from the other, from the Oriental side. Um, oh there's all kinds, let me see if I can think of some examples.
> The other day we had a thing about, it was one of these exercises where it says this and this happened, why do you think it happened? And it just said, ah, when she saw the fish head and the eyes in the soup, she turned green and ran out of the room. And some of them of course, I knew very well that the Chinese people just would think, wouldn't know why. . . . Like I say, it happens almost every day that we run into something. Where, especially when it involves people's reactions, where it's cultural and possibly it's different. They can't even read anything into it because it doesn't make sense. Why did she turn sick at that? They can't make anything of it until you tell them, this is how things are here.
> (T#31 pp. 4-6)

T#31 went on to say that this sort of thing is very much up to the sensitivity of the teacher, and that even though she knows the course material well and and could anticipate reactions, she tries not to do that. "The class isn't homogeneous, but even if you know that they're all Chinese, they're not all going to react the same anyways"(T#31 p. 8). Like some other informants, T#31 feels a certain pressure to cover the course content and reading materials. Exchanges and incidents such as recounted above are pleasurable for the teacher and were often retold to me as humourous and fun parts of the job.

The language ability of the class was mentioned by T#10 as a factor in how much explaining the teacher would be able to do. Certainly for interpretation beyond the concrete level a more sophisticated language ablity would be required.

> With the higher classes, you can explain more, and you can go into the topic in depth. They can talk about how they would do things differently in their country or something like that. With lower classes, I don't think you can explain as much because it's sometimes too much. The language you go into is way above them, and it's very difficult.
> (T#10 pp. 12-13)

Despite the language ability barrier, it is clear that teachers at all levels do explain things and even offer interpretations for their students.

The appropriate use of titles and first or last names was brought up constantly as an example of something cultural that requires explanation. It is tackled, with reasons, from the beginners' classes on through the other levels. Even teachers of the advanced levels said they sometimes have to insist on the informal use of first names. The teachers use first names to establish a friendly, informal tone in the class and to recognize that their adult students are also their peers. The students, who may wish to accord the teacher the special respect of using a title, or may be unfamiliar with the idea of using first names outside the family, often resist this.

The instructors told me that they usually stick to their position, occasionally making an exception for elderly students. They said they would use humour or explanations about how formality and informality are signalled among English-speaking people and what that may indicate about their relationship in order to convince the students to use only first names within the class. Only T#32 has her students call her 'Mrs. XXXX.' She considers this a sign of respect and does it to "establish the difference" between herself and the students whom she calls by their first names. T#32 is a former elementary school teacher nearing retirement age.

T#25 said he felt interpreting Canadian culture for students helped to "dispel some of the myths" the students may have heard about how Canadians live. Taking an example from the theme of family life, he said many students think Canadians mistreat their elders:

> They believe all old people wind up in old people's homes because the children hate their grandparents or have no respect for their parents and don't want to see them after they get to be sixty-five. So I explain to them that that's not always true, and that's not usually true and that children don't live with their parents for specific reasons. Canada's a large country. I live here and my mother lives in (another city) and she doesn't want to live with me in my apartment. I go to visit her. She's healthy and happy being there, all her friends are there, and that's why she doesn't live with me.
> (T#25 p. 40)

Like other informants, T#25 draws on his family and his personal life to interpret Canadian values with real examples.

The ESL teacher is sometimes described as a link or a bridge between the language learner and the community of English-speakers with whom the learner presumably wishes to interact. This clichéd image for the ESL teacher's position was sometimes mentioned with apologies, and the assertion that each ESL program is in many ways 'a bridge program.' In essence, the linking function is where the example or model aspect of the teacher's role combines with the interpreting function. As T#29 explains:

> I think they probably look to me as a link, and all the other teachers as well as a link. Because they often say,"yeah but XXXX said this, or yeah, but she doesn't do that, you know. So they're already beginning to see that there are differences, but they do see you definitely as a link, their link toward the rest of society.
> (T#29 p. 32)

Being the link means being the informant, being the person who gives the learner 'good, realistic information.' This is a trust that seems to exist between teachers and learners, a trust that the teachers will give them their best reading of a situation. T#13 questioned the teachers' claim to working as a link between the learner and the mainstream English-speaking culture of Vancouver:

> How much linking do we all do? Uhm, I think that's probably the goal that we all as teachers want to strive towards or we favour doing, but I think each one of us has to question, are we doing it? And if so, are we doing it well?
> (T#13 p. 19)

T#13 did not pursue this with the question, "And how would we know?" but it is a question several teachers implied in their interviews. They said they knew they were role models or example Canadians, and that they did explain Canadian practices, or interpret the value or meaning of cultural symbols, but in the end some said they could not really be sure that the students were making connections between classroom experience and life in the greater community.

T#20 went so far as to suggest that the teachers were making a mistake in assuming that the students had classroom learning reinforced by interaction outside the school. Because English did not touch their daily lives, he said English was really a foreign language for many learners (T#20 p. 18). From this point of view, the instructor would indeed serve as a link, and perhaps a unique one, between the learner and the English speaking community, and that role would become an important one for the adult students' developing understanding of both the English language and English Canadian society.

C. TEACHING INTERCULTURALLY

> I don't think you can teach culture as much as you prepare activities that get them to think about cultural differences. It's got to come from comparing their past experience and background with what they're growing into or what they're facing at this moment.
> (T#13 p. 15)

In English Canada, ESL classes like the ones taught by the informants are always intercultural learning situations. Even if against all likelihood the students were to share a cultural and social background, the teacher would represent the additional perspective of an English speaker with an understanding of English Canadian culture. The exchange of viewpoints and the mix of cultures in the ESL class is seen as a positive feature of ESL work, although as this section will examine, it sometimes results in conflicts between students and raises difficult questions for the teachers.

Cultural differences provide the ESL classes with a natural high-interest topic for discussion. Since learners are already experts on their own cultures, talking about culture taxes English language abilities without challenging the students' knowledge base. In classes where education levels may vary widely, this is an equalizing factor that encourages participation in discussions. Very often comparisons of cultural perspectives are undertaken "as a vehicle for teaching the language rather than using the language as a vehicle for looking at culture" (T#18 p. 7). Cultural discussion topics may be used as the context through which grammar elements are presented or practised, may arise from a reading passage or from the news, or may be structured into an assigned composition.

Informants said they sometimes have students speak in front of the whole class, as T#27 explains:

> . . . I'll get them to prepare something on their own country where they'll be doing a little talk about the food, about the clothes, about the culture in general, about the families, how they treat different members of the family. . . the way of life. Very often it brings things out. What I'll do is I'll give one day to each nationality. . . And that makes them feel a little proud of their own heritage as well as at the same time the other students get an opportunity to understand each other. And you know, they're using English all the time.
> (T#27 pp. 13-14)

T#27 has many reasons for having the students learn about each others' culture of origin. She takes the opportunity to explain her own South Asian background, and why she is sometimes more comfortable in her sari than in other clothes. This informant was concerned about the students' lack of sympathy and tolerance for each other, and she does what she can to bring them together. She also said she usually organizes pot luck meals so the students can taste each others' native dishes. To ensure a successful meal, she recommends that students prepare certain specialties that she has found to be universally well-received.

T#13, quoted at the beginning of this section, suggests that students' understanding of Canadian culture has to come from their own reflection of their past experience compared to their present experience. The teacher may encourage this by questioning, but she does not call this "teaching culture" because she believes that culture cannot be taught. T#34 immigrated to Canada as an adult; he reported that he recently asked students to speak in front of their class about their first impressions of Canada. His reasons for this, other than to practice English, were explained as follows:

> I thought it would be easy for them to do and also, to make them aware of the differences, instead of teaching them culture.
> (T#34 p. 5)

In these cases then, the comparisons and the culture teaching come from the students themselves.

T#34 said he sometimes does "teach culture" because he likes the students "to do [some things] in Canadian ways." He takes a very pragmatic view of this, and simply equates changing certain public behaviours to fit into Canadian norms with the students' instrumental need to go to work and get along with other people here. If they do not fit in, he said, "they'll be treated as a different person or a different group forever" and he does not believe they would want that (p. 12). He gave the following example of a student who used to take his shoes off in class:

> I said, "I don't know whether you could do it in your country or not, but it's not accepted in this country." And he asked me why. I said, well just simply in a public place you don't take off your shoes. "You may be thinking that you're having a good time, but what would other people think?" And he said he didn't know that it was not accepted in this country.
> Another thing is I encourage them to raise their hands whenever they have something to say. And that is, when I was at school in (native country), we were sort of afraid to answer questions and to ask them. Even though we knew what to say . . . now here I tell them whatever you have to say, say it. Because that's your right to say it.
> (T#34 p. 5)

He said he applied the strategy of doing things in Canadian ways in his own life and he thought it had been a successful one for him.

Another informant with an Oriental family background took a similar position in that she very formally, and firmly, tells students about accepted public behaviour. She calls this teaching polite behaviour and reasons that:

> . . . I think a lot of these young people come from situations where survival was so important, and (courtesy) didn't matter. And so possibly that kind of behaviour stuck and now I think that they're in a situation where they need not be that assertive, they might like to learn some, oh, gentle manners. . . . I think, outside this room, that if they are in the Canadian situation, if they are rude, boorish or assertive, it would affect the people they're with

> and they might form ill opinions of them so I think learning these niceties might probably stand them in good stead later on. . . And I think that's very necessary. So I do a lot of that, if you call that culture, I don't know.
> (T#32 pp. 19-20)

While most of the white Canadian teachers said that they might tell students if some aspect of their behaviour is offensive or surprising, the teachers with personal immigration experience were most willing to talk about this practice. They gave many examples of recent incidents. T#32 suggested that other instructors would be more cautious about risking the appearance of being an assimilationist and indeed most other teachers qualified their statements about teaching culture when that implied an intention to make the ESL adult more acceptable to mainstream society. As a member of a racial minority and an immigrant himself, T#34 felt he was unlikely to be accused of trying to assimilate ESL adults to the Canadian mainstream.

In contrast, T#30, who shares a similar racial background and immigration experience with T#34, has a different viewpoint on the cultural intentions of the ESL programs and the legitimate intercultural role of the instructor. She said that although she feels it is essential to know about North American culture to really understand the language and appreciate the literature, she finds some of the prescribed course material written by her fellow instructors makes her uncomfortable:

> I think so many of the items in the book are cultural, and I don't have any trouble doing them, but at times I would say, well I really don't want

> to teach this because it's so, ah, I mean you are sort of pushing one culture into another. In a way, you're sort of pushing one way of thinking into another and I really don't know if I want to do that. (T#30 p. 13)

This instructor objects to the tone, in addition to some of the content, of the course readings. She suggested that she probably takes a more intellectual or more abstract approach to teaching cultural understandings, although she added that at the lower levels "It's almost impossible and you may have to teach certain cultural things blindly" (p. 14). T#30 is the only informant out of the thirty-five interviewed who felt that the course material, and some of her fellow teachers, were too concerned about Canadian culture and pushed it onto the students.

Although many informants spoke of cultural differences as being of interest, they were also clearly interested in cultural similarities. Several informants stressed that they aimed to bring out the positive aspects of each learner's culture, to validate and appreciate it. T#8 called this "sharing in a positive way, working on the universals"(p. 23), and said that she has written materials for a series of discussions structured around comparisons of common experiences.

Since the instructors are well travelled, it sometimes happens that they are able to say something about a given country from first hand experience. T#24 said students from China ask her for her impressions of that country:

> They're always surprised when I tell them that I think China is just an amazingly beautiful country

> and it is. I guess maybe they're surprised I find positive things to say about it because they have chosen to leave.
> (T#24 p. 31)

This informant said that she always tries to be "more positive than negative" about her impressions of a student's homeland, even for countries she is not really keen on, and usually that is not too difficult to do.

Cultural comparisons are not always positive, nor are they always fair. Informants spoke about intergroup problems among students who are often not accustomed to a multicultural environment.

> One of the things that happens with pronunciation for example, when you have a class that has Europeans and Central Americans with the Asians, there's the tendency for the ones whose pronunciation is better to think that pronunciation then is a matter of intelligence.
> So one of the things I've been doing is to try and give them an insight into why the Asians have all these pronunciation problems.I would use myself as the role model and how I would have real difficulty pronouncing some of the things that are in their language, whether it's Vietnamese or Spanish or Polish. And then try to draw the conclusion that difficulty with pronunciation isn't a question of intelligence and education.
> (T#8 p. 2)

T#8 tries to learn to pronounce her students' names authentically, and has the students demonstrate their first languages' writing system for the class; her aim she said is "to start them thinking that the differences are not intellectual differences" (p. 4).

The kind of prejudice the informants talked about is seen by them as an artifact of the students' culture of origin which was often a more homogeneous society than the one they find in Canada. The learners' prejudices may be based on historical animosites or myths about foreigners learned in the homeland. In this way, then, these beliefs are part of the 'cultural baggage' of the adult ESL learner.

The informants from the vocational English program were, as a group, most aware and most concerned about prejudice among the students. T#12 phrased her perspective on the issue this way:

> T#12: One of the things that's kind of off-putting from time to time is the lack of tolerance that some of our students have for others of our students. There's bigotry among the students and that's difficult to handle. How do you tolerate somebody else's intolerance? And do you tolerate it?
>
> TD: Do you tolerate it?
>
> T#12: No. No, but you have to understand why they're intolerant and then try to help them to break down that barrier.
> (T#12 p. 27)

This informant went on to say that she considers this a part of her job.

The informants from the vocational English program gave examples of incidents from their classes where students not getting along together caused them concern. These ranged from students refusing to work with others, to incidents such as comments or laughter at the expense of individuals. The informants believed these incidents to be based on values carried over from the culture of origin.

> T#14: Well, in the class they're basically well-behaved and pretty subtle. But you know what's going on. Or often what they'll do is they'll be very nice in the class and if they happen to see you alone, like if you're on a field trip and there's some Polish person, they'll pull you aside - this happens

> to everybody - and say like, "Don't you think there's too many Chinese people here? Vancouver has too many Chinese people." Or "the problem with this class is that there are too many Chinese people." I've had that happen.
>
> TD: And do you say . . . ?
>
> T#14: I say, "No I don't think it's a problem for me. You know, Canada, Vancouver, has a lot of Chinese people. You'll be working with these people when you get a job."
> (T#14 pp. 16)

She said that she understood some of the reasons for this particular incident, that the Polish students were from a society where the people mostly looked the same and lived in the same way. T#14 said there was once a workshop for the teachers about the Polish community and their adjustment to Canadian society. Discussing this same problem T#17 said she found it hard to deal with "racists" and even questioned the influence that some "right-winged Europeans" may have on Canadian society in general.

The other frequently mentioned example of an intergroup situation that informants were distressed about had to do with students of Chinese origin speaking disparagingly about Canadian Native Indians. In this long quote, T#27 explains how she handles that situation:

> T#27: They bring the Native Indian into the picture often. "Up on Hastings, I can't stand these drunk Indians" and stuff like that. So there I come out with both barrels actually on that issue.
>
> TD: Uh huh. And what do you say?
>
> T#27: Well, I'll say "what do you mean? Is that all Indians?" and you know. Trying to make sure, you know, "who is it that you saw? How many did you see? And why are they like that?" Try to get the students to see that it's not just, that it's the result of

> situations that are not their fault and that's what I try to bring up. So they can look at why, the reasons for it.
> I follow up on things like that. Like I would have told some stories, or had them read like Chief Dan George's book, *My Heart Soars*. Things so that they understand that there's a soul and a heart and a mind behind it, not just your basic derelict. I find that cutting down the walls of prejudice is extremely important to me.
> (T#27 p. 16)

The teachers who gave this example said they understood that the close proximity of Chinatown to the 'skid row' area meant that some Chinese students had very negative impressions from their encounters with Canadian Natives.

The informants told me about other kinds of conflicts and their efforts to ease them. The only informant outside the vocational program who said he took notice of the students' comments and felt a responsibility to respond to them put it this way:

> When you have a situation where a Korean girl says, "Oh, I can't stand East Indians" and there's an Indian sitting at the same table, to sort of ask her if she'd stay after and say "Look, you know this really is not too diplomatic." I wonder if that's just common sense or if that's cultural teaching. I don't know.
> (T#18 p. 8)

While T#18 was the only informant outside the vocational program who gave a specific example and expressed concern about intercultural relations between students, the informants from the vocational English program all saw reacting negatively to bigotry and challenging prejudices as appropriate dimensions of the teacher's role. Several informants from this program said they would be concerned about teachers who did not challenge students' prejudices, and some added that they try to challenge their own.

After some thought, T#17 said this about her efforts to "break down" prejudice among students:

> Yeah, I don't know if that's my role as teacher [to widen students' views or broaden their thoughts about other people]. I would say that's my role as a person, and yeah, as a teacher in this program. (T#17 p. 23)

This sentiment was expressed by several other vocational English informants who felt it was a simple human duty to be concerned for equal treatment and mutual respect among people. In the quotation above, T#17 qualifies her reasoning on the issue with an emphatic stress on "this program," referring to the 'Manpower' sponsored vocational English course for adults learning English to gain entry-level employment.

It became apparent early in the field work period that the instructors in the vocational English program were most concerned and active in the intercultural aspects of the teacher's role that involve intergroup relations. In the course of the pilot study, I came to think of the active pursuit of better interstudent relations as 'multi-culturalizing' the students because the goal of this activity was to make the students more tolerant of each other and of people outside their particular ethnic community. Ultimately the informants believed it would better prepare the students to live and work in Canada's ethnically diverse society. When I had the chance to interview some of the senior faculty members of this program, I asked them about this attitude among the instructors, its evolution, and also about their personal notion of the program's goals.

T#23, for example, has been at the college since the early days of ESL and has considerable experience in the 'Manpower' program, as it is commonly known. I asked this informant if the program works to 'multiculturalize' the students:

> T#23: We do. It's done unconsciously, right now. I mean it's now to the stage that it's become [part of the] nature of most of the teachers. They vary though, I mean each teacher has their own comfort level, how to deal with that.
> (T#23 p. 14)

The issue of intercultural relations among the students in this program has been informally discussed for a long time, according to this informant. Often, in the coffee room or over the photocopier an instructor will mention a specific student or an incident and the teachers will compare ideas of how to handle the problem. The fact that these instructors seem more likely to see an intercultural conflict as a problem for them, however, distinguishes this group.

The justification for this involvement in 'multiculturalizing' learners in this program goes back to the 'Manpower' program's mandate to teach English to immigrants whose lack of English language ability prevents them from obtaining even entry-level employment. The fact that almost all of the students in these classes have very limited experience with Canadians and Canadian society and relatively limited English ability seems to justify the instructors' interest in the students' behaviour. T#23 put it this way:

> We have to be very careful how we treat the students. We're one of the first people who open a door. Our reaction in many situations will set their interpretation of how the culture will treat them. (T#23 pp. 7-8)

The vocational English class then, is where the immigrants' first impressions of Canadian society are formed through involvement with the educational facility. Since a new immigrant is often assisted in other settlement by family members or people who speak the same language, the ESL class may be the student's first independent venture into English Canadian society.

When asked about the goals of the program, T#23 said that the program was a bridge, the first post for the new immigrant who, along with all his other adjustments to life in Canada, has the opportunity to learn a minimum level of English in the relatively short period of five months. The teachers inevitably help their students with all of their various questions and difficulties; he said:

> You have to help them, so there's this whole form of acculturalization that's a hidden agenda as people are going through our five months, but our objective is to give them enough English to survive out there. (T#23 pp. 20-21)

Whether this 'hidden agenda' is shared among the teachers is difficult to say with certainty, but when T#17 emphasized that it was her role to combat prejudice in "this program," she implied that in another program, with other students, she might not feel so responsible for encouraging the development of tolerant attitudes in her students.

Indeed, informants from the two other programs did have a different view of the appropriate way to handle intergroup conflict. Only about one quarter of the informants from the general ESL and the academic ESL programs said that they were aware of any problems in students getting along together in class. These informants who were aware of animosities or incidents said they took no action and tried not to react to comments or incidents in class.

The remaining informants said that there were no real problems with students getting along in their classes; they also said that they allowed students to sit with other students from their first language group, and did not try to interfere with their choice of partners. T#19, one of those who said there were no problems, said that it is up to the teacher to set the tone for the class and that if the teacher had a "chip on her shoulder," then that would be transmitted to the students.

An informant from the general ESL program related the following incident that happened in the class she had at the time of the field research. One particular young man from India, the most able student in the class and a bit of a favorite with the teacher, was ridiculed by his classmates during a reading exercise. The Indian student wore his hair in a top knot covered by a piece of cloth rather than in a turban. T#28 retold the incident this way:

> In this context exercise where they must find the reference, the sentence we had was, "He wears his rather long" and you and I would immediately think hair. They don't.
>
> I always take things a little further, so I said, "Who in here wears their hair long?" And [one student] who's outrageous, points to [the student from India] and says "Him!"
>
> The class cracked up. Just cracked up. I know that there's a conflict between the Chinese and the East Indians, tension. And I thought the only way to deal with this is to go quickly on to something else, so I said, "Who wears their hair short?" Well, they're not listening. They're just cracking up over the fact that XXXX has his hair like that.
>
> The best thing I felt was to ignore them and go on to something else. I just kept talking until they calmed down. I didn't laugh. Now, I really don't know how to deal with that. And I still think about it.
> (T#28 p. 37)

T#28 said she hoped that the Chinese students understood that she did not join their laughter because she did not share their attitude, and that they would realize that other Canadians might feel that way too.

Another informant from the general ESL program, T#22, said that she had never really considered the possibility of an intercultural conflict dynamic in her class. Then one day a substitute teacher mentioned that she thought a particular student was having difficulties working with the Chinese and Vietnamese students. The informant, who had noticed that this student caused a lot of disruption in the lessons by insisting that only the teacher speak to her, realized that the substitute teacher's judgment was probably correct. T#22 said she then went out of her way to change the ways in which the students were paired, to make supportive comments about all of the students' work, and to arrange successful group experiences for the class members. At the time of our interview, about four weeks after the initial decision to do something about the class atmosphere and this particular student, T#22 said she could see a change in this student's attitude toward the Asian members of the class. The instructor felt pleased about this outcome (T#22 p.4).

T#22's strategy to change working relationships is the only such treatment related to me by an informant from the general ESL or academic ESL programs. Most of these other informants said they were not aware of any problem, or like T#28, they chose to appear unaware and not react at all to the students' comments. T#20 is one of the latter group. He said that he is concerned, for example, about some Chinese students looking down on Native Indian people. Then he added:

> T#20: But I wouldn't do very much. The thing is I don't feel that I have the responsibility or the power to actually go in and try and say, you know, you should do this, you should think this.
>
> TD: Would you say anything, for example, if somebody said something that you thought was really racist?
>
> T#20: Well, that has happened once or twice. When they do that I usually just leave it go. I just leave it go, because I think the fact of putting this into words causes the people who say it to think about it. Sometimes they do it to test my reaction to things. They know that Canada is a multicultural society.
> (T#20 p. 4)

There would seem to be a contradiction in T#20's statement that the students are seeking his reaction to their statements, yet he only reacts by not reacting. The students could likely interpret that as tacit approval for their comments. If this is contradictory reasoning, it is a contradiction that T#20 has reconciled in his own mind. Even if students are looking to him for an indication of his position in regard to their intergroup prejudices, he feels he cannot provide any indication of what that position may be and he tries not to judge the students by their comments. He elaborated upon this as follows:

> T#20: . . . But then you know the thing is that you have to keep in mind that these people must be respected as human beings. Many times over my career I have heard students complain about other teachers, not directly about me, that they are angry or unhappy with teachers because they have tried to push things on them. You know, they come out and tell them what they should think. You've got teachers who are in there carrying the white man's burden.
>
> TD: Uh huh. So you think that even though it's too bad that [students] are prejudiced that it's certainly not your business to straighten them out?
>
> T#20: Well, it's not. Almost all Canadians are filled with prejudices. I myself have all sorts of prejudices. People do, you know. And grab a collection of Canadians off a bus stop and you will find the same level of intolerance or a roughly equivalent level, to what the students have. (T#20 p. 18)

This the line of reasoning was offered by all of the informants in these two programs who were aware of, but chose to ignore, bigotry among the students. This included two of the informants from the academic program, and several more from the general program. During the pilot interviews for this study, the informant from the academic English program said that many of the students' opinions on different issues bothered her deeply but she just could not 'propagandize' the students by allowing them to know how she felt about it. This position is like that of informants who felt the influence of the teacher as an example needed to be kept under control. Similarly then, in the role dimension of teaching interculturally these informants feel the teacher should remain neutral, above and outside the students' beliefs for fear of abusing the teacher's influence.

I put it to T#28 that some of her colleagues had told me that the students are entitled to their prejudices. She replied:

> Yes, but I don't like the way in which they display them sometimes. I object to that. They can have them privately, but to display them openly like that, I do object.
> (T#28 p. 40)

This is by far the strongest statement from an instructor outside the vocational English program. Despite her strong feelings about the incident she related, T#28 did not change her teaching approach or mention her feelings about it to any members of the class. Yet, from the force of the declaration, it would seem that T#28 would object to this kind of behaviour, not only from her ESL students, but from anyone.

How can we account for this marked difference in the perceived appropriate role for the ESL instructor on this dimension of teaching interculturally? While the informants in one program, the vocational English program, reported that improving intergroup relations by broadening the students' perceptions of others, promoting tolerance, and overcoming prejudice were valid and important parts of their work, the informants from the other two programs neither recognized the need for this, or if they did perceive the problem then they did not see it as their responsibility to act on it. The informants have contrasting views not only on the appropriate role for the ESL teacher but also on their awareness of the relevance of intercultural relations to their situation.

The key to this contrasting perception of their intercultural role is in the instructors' view of their students. In the vocational English program, as several informants have said, the students are new immigrants to Canada, with little or no command of English. It is assumed by the instructors in this program and by the program's curricula that these students also have little or no knowlege of North American life, nor of the structures, assumptions and values of Canadian society. The students are in 'culture shock' and are thought to be making innumerable adjustments in their new lives. Because of the program's function as an in-take and orientation program, the instructors already feel responsible for teaching these students about life in Canada. For these teachers, maintaining tolerant relations with others is a part of that life, so an attempt is made to foster at least an understanding of that value, if not a change in attitude. Vocational English students are relatively powerless, and generally least able to express themselves; as people in the process of change, they are viewed as able to change in many ways.

The students in the general and academic ESL programs are usually already settled in the community. Many have obtained Canadian citizenship[68], have families and established careers. These students are seen by their teachers as more autonomous, less likely to change, and a valid segment of Canadian society. The teachers are much less likely to try to influence these students who, far from the neophytes of the vocational ESL program, are experienced and active members of Canadian society. Most of the students in these two programs are studying English with the intention of completing or upgrading their education; they are a long way from the survival level of the vocational English students.

'Teaching interculturally' is a dimension of the teacher's perceived role that would seem to divide the informants quite clearly along program lines in so far as it concerns intercultural relations between students. Informants from each of the programs, however, offered similar views on their ideas of the intercultural relationship between students and teachers in regards to their philosophy of teaching. As summaries of their intentions and attitudes regarding working with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, these encapsulated statements of ideals reflect a basic respect for the adult learner as an equal and autonomous individual.

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[68] Department statistics for April, 1985 show that 43.5% of students in the general program and 44.9% of those in the academic program have been in Canada for more than the three years required before application for citizenship. In contrast, the majority of students in vocational ESL have refugee status.

T#10, for example, spoke of learning as not changing the students, but expanding their repertoire of accepted language and behaviour (p. 23). Similarly T#12 and T#24 said that learners do not need to give things up to learn English, but instead the learning process should always be a gain; the home culture and first language will remain primary and need to be respected. An informant from the academic program, T#21, said she tries to express to her students that there is no judgement made by her of their first language and culture, and that they do not have to choose between their familiar ways and Canadian ways. The very act of learning English can be a threat, she said, so her attitude is not that this is the way, but that this is what works here, in the English language and the associated culture. A majority of the informants express their respect for the integrity of their students' cultures of origin and first languages by remaining genuinely interested in them and learning about them. Almost all of the informants said that 'the cultural mix' of working with people from all over the world was one of the main things they enjoyed about their work as ESL teachers.

Once again, the personal intercultural experience of the informants is a major contributing factor to their perception of this role dimension. By and large the informants attributed the development of their perspective to positive experience in living outside Canada or in travelling around the world. Those with immigration memories, or immigrant parents, pointed to that source.

T#23 opened his interview by asking if the study would look into the question of whether a multicultural background is an asset or a liability to the ESL teacher. Who, then, he wondered, would be the better ESL instructors, monocultural Canadians or people with first-hand experience as foreigners and language learners. It is a question the informant said had two answers; the latter teachers would no doubt have great empathy for the learners' situations, but the former would likely be more representative of the general population, the 'target' community for the students. T#23 said he was concerned that "some of the unilingual younger teachers" were not really aware of their own culture, and were insensitive to that of their students who were hurt as a result.

The study did not, of course, try to make an evaluation of the suitabililty of the informants for their work. T#16, however, provided his opinion on the necessary requirements for the successful ESL teacher:

> I think it's impossible to teach ESL well unless you have a wide linguistic background. . . It's not enough to have studied linguistics or be familiar with several languages though, [because] the cultural experience is also absolutely essential. You've got to live in another language, in another country. Some experience of cultural relativism or whatever is absolutely essential as far as I'm concerned.
> (T#16 p. 34)

Although there were some second or third hand reports of intolerance among instructors, some form of cultural relativism is a prevalent view among the informants. Even those like T#7 and T#15, who were less aware of cultural dynamics and less interested in them generally, had sought out these kinds of experiences through travel and study out of interest kindled in their classrooms.

D. LISTENING AND HELPING - BEING A FRIEND

> If the students get to trust you, the teacher becomes, I think, quite important. Often you wind up being a counsellor. Sometimes you wind up being a psychologist. Not that you give any kind of advice on serious problems, but you become a listener. And they think you have the answers to a lot of problems that you don't really have the answers to.
> (T#25 p. 22)

The students in adult ESL classes seem to face a great many problems, according to their teachers. The informants told me about some of their students who appeared to have innumerable bureaucratic, family, or health difficulties. Time and again informants have said that they function as a kind of a link or a resource, referring students to the appropriate person or place to seek help. This action was also discussed under the role dimension described as 'explaining and interpreting' where the instructor is working with learners as a group to enhance their understanding of Canadian society and the assumptions that underly it. In this, the fourth dimension of the informants' perceived role as teachers of culture, the interaction is personal and usually private.

Almost all of the informants were able to think of students in their present classes, or students they had known within the last few months, who came to them to talk about something that was worrying them. It was by no means an uncommon occurrence, and yet it seemed to be limited to a few students per term. This means that only a small portion of the teachers' student load may demand this kind of attention. Although the informants spoke as though many, or even the majority of students, were probably experiencing difficulties and were worried about some aspects of their situations, it would seem that the students who open up to their teachers are a minority.

I asked the informants who said that they knew about students' problems how they became aware of them. The informants all agreed that the approach is usually indirect. The student may be inattentive or miss class, or as T#33 has found:

> Often they'll reflect some sort of problem in their composition so you ask them about it, you know. They won't come to you directly, but they'll signal you in some way like that.
> (T#33 p. 15)

Since written work is usually private between the teacher and the writer, disclosure through writing was a common response, especially when students keep personal journals. In classes where little writing is done, the students approached the teacher after class or outside class hours.

There was a complete range of perspectives on this role dimension among the informants. A few were very involved with what one of them called the 'social worker stuff,' while at the other end of the spectrum, two said that they had never had a student with a problem, and had never been approached. In between these two extremes, about half the informants said they regularly listen to students and offer their support and suggestions, while the other half said they had neither the expertise, the time, nor the emotional energy to fulfill this need.

Those who did act as confidantes searched for a variety of metaphors to characterize the relationship. The most popular explanation was that they were like a friend to the student, and listened supportively. Two informants said that they extended this to real friendship, sometimes socializing with students; three informants said they always give out their home telephone number so they are available at all times to their students.

Two informants called upon family relations for their descriptions. T#10 saw herself as "a big sister" who offered support but no advice, while T#32 said she was more like a parent who did give her idea of the options open and the best thing to do. T#33 thought about which image fit his involvement with individual students who want to talk to him. He first mentioned and rejected the parental, and then the friend, metaphors before concluding:

> [Those] don't work 'cause they're not really true. Just as somebody who's like a bartender, you know? They can come and talk about things. If I can give them some insight, I will. That's the sort of thing. I think that's better than [thinking of it] as some sort of leader or parent.
> (T#33 p.25)

The bartender is an image in some ways truer to the accounts of some informants than that of the teacher as friend. It conveys the detachment and the inevitability of these encounters from some of the instructors' perspectives. About half made comments close to T#25's "If you're accessible [some students] will take advantage of that because they need somebody to talk to" (p. 24), implying that these encounters are not really an indication of the quality of the relationship between the available instructors and their students. Although T#25 seems to mean that almost anybody could fulfill the listener function, it would seem that teachers are approached because they are trusted, appear to be sympathetic, and are thought to have at least some of the answers.

There were a few common motivations described by instructors who do spend time listening to and helping students who seek them out. T#23 said that offering help to someone that you know is in need is just "being a citizen." He cautioned that teachers should not dismiss the students' worries, and should not be flippant or impatient when approached by a student with a problem to discuss. Informant T#34 said that he had a lot of help from people when he immigrated and he knows how much it is needed by the students. There were three informants who seemed to especially enjoy and become involved in 'counselling.' Two of them have gone so far as to take counselling courses on their own time to be better prepared for this aspect of their interaction with students; the other one said that involvement with students extended to her social life and free time on weekends.

Instructors who were available as sympathetic listeners and resource people for students gave a variety of examples of what those conversations might typically involve. One of the informants who was more involved and quite comfortable in this role said that the conversation and her part in it would depend on the particular student, but she offered this:

> Well, I usually listen. If they need some information, I'll often tell them where they can go. One time for example, one of my students left something on the bus. She didn't know what to do, and she didn't really have enough English to make the calls so I called up the various places for her. You know, the lost and found, the police to tell them what she'd lost, her credit card companies and all that. (T#27 p. 6)

T#27 gave several other examples of recent problems brought to her by students. These included difficulties with government agencies, serious family problems involving alcoholism and violence, and the case of a student who felt he was facing discrimination in his workplace. This informant, like some others, has been telephoned at home by students in crisis, and she has responded to the best of her ability.

There were some differences among the instructors who listen and help as to the problem areas with which they feel comfortable. Some said they always refer legal or medical problems immediately, while others were reluctant to hear about family problems. Most, however, at least heard the student out before referral:

> If I can, I first try and talk it through by myself and then if I can't, if I don't know anyone who can help or if I can't do it myself then I will refer them finally to the counsellor here.
> (T#17 p. 16)

Informants such as T#27 who actively help students cautioned that it is occasionally difficult to judge how far to become involved. Several informants said they had personally been taken advantage of by students who became overdependant or exploited their willingness to assist them. Other informants said they knew of instances where this happened and the students became "leeches" or treated the relationship as a "crutch" to avoid taking charge of their own affairs. The other danger cited was the emotional involvement with students, which can be a burden on the instructor.

> I'm not a counsellor. I'm a language teacher. I try not to take too many of the problems home, but it's somewhat unavoidable. . . on several occasions I've become involved where I probably shouldn't have. In most cases it's purely a professional sort of thing, but I'm also their friend.
> (T#18 p. 9)

This informant went on to say that he related to his students on a human level; for him this involvement is unavoidable. All of the informants who respond emotionally to students' problems said that this involvement is difficult to control.

At the other end of the spectrum of perceived appropriate behaviour for a teacher approached by students with personal problems are a few informants who said they are not really aware of students' problems. These informants have seldom if ever been approached, and they indicated that they would not welcome such a conversation. T#15 said for example:

> I haven't really got into students' problems. If they come and ask me, then I'll talk to them but I haven't had that often. No, hardly ever. And then, it's usually more about trouble with learning or attending regularly because of a job, or something like that.
> (T#15 pp. 23-24)

Similarly T#7 said it rarely happened that a student came to her privately for any reason, while T#30 said that it was not her personality to encourage disclosure of that kind.

The other informants were aware that their students needed someone to talk to, and said that they were approached. They simply refer students on to the counselling department, or another appropriate service agency when the need arises. Two of these informants said that they just did not have time to devote to individual students, while the rest generally said that they felt ill-equipped to handle problems. They felt the professional counsellor would be a better person for the student to confide in.

Some of these informants who refer on all students seeking a sympathetic ear or some advice said that they felt involvement with students' problems would be emotionally draining. T#29 put it best:

> T#29: I'm not trained for one thing, and for another thing it would kill me if I knew what was going on in all their lives. I couldn't stand it. . .
>
> TD: Do you have the impression that they have a fair amount of problems?
>
> T#29: Oh yes, everything you can imagine. But I feel it's, I send them to the counsellors. Because they will bleed me to death. I can't do it. My job is to teach them. It's a survival thing.
> (T#29 pp. 34-35)

In contrast to other informants who felt that listening to students' problems and helping them as best they can was a part of their role, these teachers feel justified in absolving themselves of such involvement because it lies outside their view of their role as teachers.

T#13 was critical of her colleagues in this regard. As one of the teachers who actively listened, she argued against the position of those who do not. She said that too many teachers do not want to know about their students' backgrounds, and failed to take the time to really understand them and their problems. T#13 asserted that unless there was good rapport between the teacher and the student, and unless the student felt comfortable and secure, then the instructor was really pushing them away from effective language learning (pp. 8-9). Supporting the student emotionally then, was for her a part of the ESL teacher's role.

One of the senior faculty members who practises supportive listening, and refers on all problems that seem to require more help or expertise than he can offer, spoke about a "range of comfort levels" among the teachers. He felt that at either end of the spectrum of behaviours, extreme positions were untenable:

> I don't think the teacher should be put into the position where people just attach themselves like leeches. At the other end, I don't think anyone should be at the point where they 're completely calculating and say no all the time. . .because that's closing a gate, that's not helping anybody. (T#23 p. 26)

This same informant expressed surprise when I suggested that some teachers weren't really aware of students' problems. He pointed out that was a good indicator of the comfort of the student/teacher relationship, and speculated that those instructors "send off signals that they're not approachable"(p. 26).

T#18, who like T#13 feels that being an approachable, helping instructor makes him a more effective one, had a relatively high level of involvement in this role dimension. He justified his involvement in 'counselling' with a remark that lead to an analysis of this role dimension along the lines of the informants' cultural identity groupings:

> I'm probably much more sympathetic to their cultures than a lot of people because I've lived extensively in a lot of these cultures, and travelled extensively. And I think to a greater extent than some teachers, I can identify with some people. (T#18 p.9)

If T#18 is correct and a major factor in determining whether or not an ESL teacher becomes involved in 'counselling' students is the teacher's experience with other cultures, then the 'internationalist' informants would be the most likely to be involved in this role dimension. Returning then to the categories established in chapter III, and comparing self-defined cultural identification with each informant's account of how students' requests for personal advice or help are dealt with, the following patterns are found.

All of the 'internationalist' informants meet with their students for supportive listening sessions, and many of them are also active helpers. Three internationalists said they do much less of this than they once did and are now more likely to refer students to the counsellors or a community agency for help. They said that they limit their time spent in private conversations of this kind due to overinvolvement in the past, emotional drain, or family commitments. This is the only group in which not one informant said that they feel it is someone else's responsibility entirely and therefore they do no 'counselling' at all.

The informants who described themselves as bicultural mainstream Canadians were split on this role dimension. Four of the eight in this group said they always refer students to those better qualified to deal with their problems and those who are in a position to be able to help. Three of these four are second generation Canadians, the children of immigrants. In contrast, all those in this group with personal immigration experience do listen to and help their students with problems.

A much smaller proportion of the monocultural mainstream informants are active in this role dimension. Only three of the eleven in this group said they tried to deal with the situations themselves when approached by students with problems, if only by being a supportive listener. Only one of the three went beyond listening to personally try to help students. Interestingly this informant, T#35, could match the profile of the internationalists in age and experience living abroad, but because he called himself a mainstream Canadian he is in the mainstream category.

It would seem that empathy with students, what T#18 called the ability to "identify with some people," is a common characteristic among the teachers who go out of their way to meet the students' need for someone to talk to and give them direction or advice. For the informants who are more empathetic, referring the students seeking help on to someone else takes place only after they have listened to the student's problem and perhaps offered their assistance. A few of the informants said they did this because of the obligation of past kindness they had known as strangers themselves; most, however did it out of caring and empathy for the students' needs. Those who felt no obligation or interest in helping their students with non-school problems were justified in referring to the counselling department or elsewhere since these specialized services exist to meet exactly those needs. Both informants who do handle personal problems and those who do not saw their choice as responsible and professional; they all made their decision in keeping with their perception of the ESL teacher's appropriate role in working with students from other cultures.

E. SUMMARY

This chapter has examined the range of viewpoints expressed by the informants on the ESL teacher's role as a teacher of culture. As we have seen, the ESL teacher, in addition to being a language teacher, is a teacher of Canadian culture who works between that culture and the cultures of the students. For analysis and presentation, the informants' perceptions of their intercultural roles were described under four role dimensions. In the teachers' minds, and in reality, these dimensions are not entirely distinct, but rather are interwoven and interdependent. The majority of the informants said they had never thought about their intercultural role; their relationship with their immigrant adult students is largely unexamined.

There was considerable consensus concerning the first intercultural role dimension examined which I have called 'being an example.' All but two of the thirty informants admitted that their students looked to them as examples of Canadian people, although some were uncomfortable or ambivilant about being a role model. Informants felt that students drew inferences from their teachers' behaviour and inevitably generalized from those inferences in their expectations of the behaviour of other Canadian people. While some informants feared students would be misled because their teachers were not in fact typical Canadians, others cautioned teachers to undermine their own influence whenever possible. Visible minority member informants said their position of authority made them good role models for students of similar racial backgrounds.

The second role dimension, 'explaining and interpreting' was described by all of the informants as one part of their work where they are overtly teaching about Canadian culture. Since so much of language use depends upon cultural understandings, explanations of word meanings and interpretations of their significance in the society could hardly be avoided. Although limited language ability could be a barrier to discussion, explanations and interpretations are offered by the teachers to students at all levels, as the example of the use of names and titles in Canadian society showed.

Most informants saw such understandings as an instrumental need; the students have to know the assumptions underlying communication and social structures so they can successfully operate in Canadian society. The informants felt responsible for providing the students with good realistic information about life in Canada, although one informant felt that sometimes the instructors pushed Canadian ways of doing things onto their students. Finally, the question was raised as to whether the ESL instructor, in making interpretations, functions as a link between the students and the greater society; this is a clichéd image to describe the ESL teacher. If as many informants believe, the ESL instructor is some students' only extended contact with an English speaking person, then the link would seem to be an apt image.

'Teaching interculturally,' the third role dimension, was examined in greatest detail. Informants' accounts of different aspects of intercultural teaching, from sharing common experiences and comparing cultural practices to coping with bigotry and intergroup conflict were presented. A marked difference was found along program lines concerning informants' perceptions of the teacher's appropriate role in dealing with these latter situations. While vocational program instructors expressed great concern about intergroup relations and reported strategies to promote tolerance among students, only two informants from the other two programs spoke of ever taking any such action. Outside the vocational English program, informants were mostly unaware of conflicts or did not feel a responsiblity to deal with them. A contrasting view of the autonomy of the students was suggested to account for this difference in role perception. In summarizing their perspectives on intercultural teaching, the informants stressed the need to respect the students' first language and culture of origin.

The fourth and final role dimension centres upon the teacher's response to individuals with problems; in keeping with that response as described by the informants, this dimension is called 'listening and helping - being a friend.' There was a complete range of involvement in and awareness of this role dimension, as well as a range of perspectives as to the appropriate attitude for the ESL teacher. While many teachers restricted their involvement to supportive listening, others gave advice or actively tried to help the people who came to them. At one end of the spectrum there were informants who said they had almost never been approached by a student with problems, while at the other there were informants for whom such conversations were common occurences.

The informants' ways of handling students with problems are in keeping with their self-defined cultural identity groupings as set out in chapter III. The monocultural mainstream instructors were least involved in listening and helping. Half the bicultural mainstream informants and all of the internationalist informants did fulfill this role, and saw it as appropriate and natural behaviour for someone in a position to be of help. Empathy with the students' situations was the most common reason for involvement, while those who always referred students to the school counsellor did so because of the demands placed upon them as listeners or a belief that the counsellors were best able to deal with student problems.

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS

A. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

> I guess [role perceptions] would be very personal, because [they] depend on the teacher's attitude of what he or she should be doing in the classroom. I think we do teach culture and maybe people who say that they are neutral about it, or that they don't, maybe they haven't thought about what culture is. (T#24 p. 35)

This study records and examines the intercultural role perceptions of individual instructors. As T#24 points out in the quotation above, role perceptions are highly personal and reflect the informant's ideas of what a person in their postion should do. It is important to remember that the dimensions of the ESL teacher of adults intercultural role, as described in this study, are derived from the analysis of reported role perceptions. On this subjective topic, the teachers themselves are the only authority and the examples they provide to illustrate their view of the cultural aspects of the their ESL classes are the only supporting evidence.

Although each informant offered unique experience as an ESL teacher, common responses and common perspectives on the dimensions of the ESL teacher's cultural role were reported. As anticipated, a range of viewpoints was found regarding the four dimensions examined. The quotations supporting the establishment of the dimensions are presented in chapter IV; in this section the range of perspectives is discussed.

On the dimension of 'being an example,' viewpoints ranged from willing acceptance of the role of example Canadian and the responsibilities that accompany that role, to denial by two informants that they fulfill the example function. By far the majority of informants were between these positions. Most informants recognized that instructors function as examples of Canadians and they sought to control whatever influence their authority may hold over their students.

This perspective of those who might be called the 'reluctant examples' is founded on a belief that the teachers are not necessarily representative of Canadians in general. There is also a complementary awareness that these informants do not expect their students to be like them. Most of the informants who held this viewpoint were self-characterized as 'internationalists'; they were, as a group, very sensitive to the accommodation of newcomers and wary of any implication that ESL programs, and by extension their work, serve to assimilate immigrants.

'Explaining and interpreting' constitues the informants' opportunity to explicitly teach their students about Canadian culture. All of the informants said that they did this to some extent; many reported that they did it a great deal. The extent to which teachers addressed both cultural information and the values associated with practices, symbols and structures seemed to depend upon at least three factors. These were the language level of the students, the teacher's willingness to stray from the planned lesson, (such conversations were seldom anticipated), and the social situation at the time.

Explanations relate information about life in English-speaking Canada; this seems to be the least controversial aspect of culture learning and teaching. Undeniably, people new to the society need to know about how it is organized. Most ESL textbooks feature this kind of information, although usually in texts explanation is rather limited and reflects positively on North American culture. Since interpretations touch upon societal values and may involve personal disclosure on the part of the teacher, interpretations were associated with an open and trusting class rapport. In general though, explaining and interpreting is undertaken by all of the informants because it directly addresses gaps in understanding that affect language comprehension. All of the informants were comfortable with this role dimension and recognized it as an appropriate undertaking for ESL teachers.

Most informants were careful to point out that the students need background knowledge in order to understand the language and exploit situations in the greater community. They were, once again, wary of appearing to pressure students to change their behaviours to conform to Canadian norms. One informant felt that the cultural content of some materials did just that. Other informants, most with personal immigration experience, took the pragmatic view that change was unavoidable and would benefit the students. These latter informants and to a lesser degree, the others as well, claim an instrumental orientation to cultural teaching since it serves the interests of the student who is then free to apply his cultural knowledge as he wishes. The difference between the groups of informants is that those with immigration experience openly said they thought it was to the learner's ultimate advantage to use his growing knowledge of Canadian culture in order to conform to Canadian expectations of behaviour. They did not see acculturation of this kind as a negative result of learning English. It was in their view, an unavoidable circumstance that followed immigration.

'Teaching interculturally' also encompasses the other features of working with culturally mixed groups of students. This includes both the rewards of sharing cross-cultural insights and the difficulties of intergroup intolerance. The way individual instructors choose to respond to the latter was associated with their view of the students, and with their program. It was suggested in the analysis of the field data that the informants who worked in the vocational program with the most recent arrivals and the least fluent students, seemed more likely to take on the responsibility of confronting bigotry in students. Informants in the other programs were either unaware of conflicts or chose to ignore them. This role dimension then, while recognized by all of the informants as an appropriate and potentially positive aspect of second language teaching, uncovered some differences in the perceived motivation for cultural teaching of this kind, and some ambiguity about its outcomes.

There was little ambiguity regarding the fourth dimension of the ESL teacher's intercultural role. 'Listening and helping - being a friend' concerns the ESL teacher's response to individual students who come to the teacher with personal problems. A full range of perspectives on this role dimension was found, with a few informants very involved in student problems, a few unaware of them, and the majority at least approached by their students. All of the informants justify their viewpoint on this role dimension and their choice of response to problems in light of their own personalities, their beliefs, or their personal coping skills. Involvement in this role dimension was associated with empathy for student problems and a willingness to know the students more personally outside the classroom.

There are a number of other findings from the interviews that have not been reported elsewhere in this document. A few of them are related to the research problem and will be briefly presented here.

I asked the informants about their interest in linguistics because technical knowledge of the language has traditionally dominated ESL teacher training and ESL classroom material. Only four of the informants reported a strong interest or an academic major in linguistics, while another two had completed more than one university course in this subject. These six informants said that they did not feel they had a more technical approach to language teaching, but several informants without this background confessed that they especially enjoyed teaching grammar to their students. A background in linguistics, then, was not an informative characteristic for this group of instructors.

Other aspects of the informants' educational backgrounds were also unremarkable. Almost all had completed some special courses in ESL methodology and theory. Ten had done some graduate level work, although not all of these ten had completed graduate degrees. Twenty-two had taught elementary or secondary school before moving into adult ESL; six of these informants gained this experience outside Canada. The eight informants who had taught only adults were not members of any one age group or cultural reference group, nor were they associated with any particular program.

How do the findings of this field study compare with the literature discussed in chapter II? To begin with, the findings offer the support of the experience of a group of ESL teachers to many of the ideas put forward by individuals reflecting upon their own work. Where Rampaul, for example, wrote of the ESL teacher as a "cultural counsellor,"[69] and Bell discussed the function of the teacher as the interpreter of the "new" society,[70] the findings report on

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[69] Y. Rampaul, "The Role of the Teacher in the Adult ESL Class in Manitoba" *Manitoba Modern Language Review* 16 (3, 1982):5-12.
[70] J. Bell, "Orientation" *TESL Talk* 14 (1-2, 1983):130-135.

'explaining and interpreting' as an important part of the informants' perceived role. The informants provide examples of how, when and why, explanations and interpretations are made.

Several writers cautioned that the monocultural ESL teacher may unconsciously act as an assimilationist force in the classroom.[71] The informants at the college had an awareness of this potential and for the most part were wary of that label. Several informants expressed the opinion that other instructors were sometimes intolerant or ethnocentric. While Beattie associated ethnocentricity with a claim to neutrality in published classroom materials,[72] none of the informants claimed a neutral approach to Canadian culture, although one or two informants were quite unaware of any cultural dynamic in their classes. Many statements, however, indicated that the informants as a group had given little thought to their role as teachers of culture, an admission in keeping with Beattie's conclusions regarding published ESL material and curricula.

Some of the literature reviewed dealt specifically with the teacher in a multicultural classroom. Wallerstein, for example, asserted the value of the teacher's interest in the students' cultures of origin, and made this interest an assumed condition and basis of her ESL program.[73] Informants in this study said that the exchange of cultural insights, and a growing understanding of cultures contributed to their enjoyment of their work. Several Canadians have written about the relationship between multiculturalism, race relations, and ESL.[74] As discussed under the role dimension of 'teaching interculturally,' some informants were found to perceive the broadening of attitudes and the promotion of tolerance as a part of their work.

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[71] E.L. Judd, "TESOL as a Political Act: A Moral Question." in J. Handscombe, R.A. Orem, and B.P. Taylor, eds., *On TESOL' 83: The Question of Control* (Washington, D.C.: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), 1984, pp. 265-273; and T. Arthur, "Where do YOU stand in the Classroom? - A Consideration of Roles, Rules and Priorities in the Language Classroom." *Op. cit.* pp. 275-283; and also J. Williams, "Immigrant Children: School's Role in Integration." in J. Rex and D. Moore, eds., *Race, Community and Conflict* (London: Oxford University Press), 1966.
[72] M. Beattie, "The Teaching of Culture Through Language" *TESL Talk* 14 (1-2, 1983)

Grant maintained that teachers in a pluralistic society need to act as mediators of culture[75] which in this analysis corresponds to 'explaining and interpreting' mainstream culture, and 'teaching interculturally' to promote pluralistic attitudes. There was some support found for Grant's ideas, especially among teachers of lower language ability level students and newly-arrived students in the vocational program.

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[73] N. Wallerstein, *Language and Culture in Conflict: Problem-posing in the ESL Classroom* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley), 1983.

[74] R. Baker, "Multiculturalism in Community-based ESL Classes" *Manitoba Modern Language Review* 16 (3, 1982):1-4.
C. Steckler, "Racism and Multicultural Education." *TEAL Occasional Papers* (Vancouver: Association of B.C.TEAL), 6 (1982):21-32.
J. Bechtold, "The Field Trip: Language Learning Outside the Classroom" *TESL Talk* 14 (1, 1982):202-211.

[75] C.A. Grant, "The Mediator of Culture: A Teacher Role Revisited" *Journal of Research and Development in Education* 11 (1, 1977):102-117.

In terms of Bochner's model, however, no real "mediators" were found.[76] An important factor in this is that Bochner examined only cross-cultural situations where the members of two cultural communities were in contact while all of the informants work in intercultural situations, with representatives of many original cultures. Although it is not entirely clear, it may be that the self-described bicultural informants sometimes function as what Bochner calls "cultural translators" for students who share their cultural background. The analysis of the data supported the importance of motivation and cultural group reference to, in this case, the informants' approach to intercultual teaching.

Finally, the literature raises the difficult question of whether or not ESL teachers, particularly monocultural ESL teachers, are assimilators. Bochner's theory leads to the anticipation of this outcome which nevertheless seems to be unsupported by the informants' accounts. The uncovering of the sizeable group of informants who did not have mainstream Canadian society as their cultural reference group is certainly a factor in the overall group analysis that would point away from these ESL teachers attempting to transform their students into assimilated, as opposed to acculturated, Canadians. In addition, the teachers' reported respect for, and interest in, their students' home cultures is not in keeping with the assumed cultural superiority that defines assimilators. On the other hand, the findings do not indicate that the informants were mediators, nor can we be certain that their actions were in harmony with their accounts, although I have no reason to disbelieve them.[77]

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[76] S. Bochner, ed., *The Mediating Person: Bridges Between Cultures* (Boston, Mass.: G. K. Hall), 1981.

Teaching a language to a group of adults is a complicated undertaking at any time; teaching them while they are in transition, "culture shock," or experiencing the kinds of problems detailed by the informants, is a considerable challenge. There were currents of idealism in the field data that are comparable to that expressed for example, by Finocchario,[78] but in sum the informants presented the intercultural aspects of the ESL teaching situation as a dilemma that each instructor resolved, consciously or unconsciously, in his or her own way.

1. THEORETICAL AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

ESL theory, research and instruction have traditionally separated language and culture. With the growing interest in cultural competence as a complementary attribute to communicative competence, there is a growing need for an understanding of the interactive nature of culture and language in language learning. An increasing number of classroom-based ESL studies are being conducted which must similarly take into consideration all aspects of the classroom situation, including social, cultural and intercultural factors. ESL methodology and language learning theories need to recognize the importance of the intercultural dynamic to the teaching/learning situation.

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[77] As a study using ethnographic techniques, this project makes no claims to prove or disprove anything; it simply reports on the range of role perceptions described.
[78] M. Finocchario, *The Crucial Variable in TESOLD: the Teacher* (Washington, D.C.: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Speech to the National Institute of Education, March 4, 1974. ED 091 948

There are theories of language learning which do recognize the importance of the link between language and culture particularly in the language development and enculturation of children.[79] In adult ESL however, linguistic competencies are generally regarded as developing independently from cultural competencies. Noteable exceptions to this tendency were found among the informants who saw language and cultural learning as inseparable.

The ESL teacher's role in teaching about the culture associated with the English-speaking community was unexamined by the informants in this study, and is largley ignored by the field in general. Yet the teacher is the main cultural informant for many learners, just as he or she is the primary linguistic informant. This study puts forward a beginning examination of the ESL teacher's role as a teacher of Canadian culture. Practicing teachers, curriculum and materials developers, and teacher educators all have a responsibility to consider, in addition to the interdependence of language and culture, the teacher's place in the development of the learners' understanding of mainstream English-speaking culture.

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[79] For example, J.S. Bruner, *Child's Talk - Learning to Use Language* (New York: W.W. Norton) 1983. Also M.A.K. Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning* (London: E. Arnold) 1978.

The findings also raise societal issues. Canada has a multicultural society with a growing number of citizens from the so-called ethnic communities. Intercultural learning situations are not restricted to ESL classrooms. Theories and goals of education in general need to account for minority cultures within mainstream school culture. It is likely that all teachers work with students who are in some ways different from themselves. The accommodation of differences among people within Canadian society is an issue that educators, as individuals and as members of the teaching profession, have a responsibility to examine.

The findings regarding the informants' cultural reference group also have societal implications. One group of informants reported a minimal identification with the Canadian mainstream. These 'internationalists' may represent a segment of Canadian middle class society that is more open to diversity and less anglo-conformist than English Canadian society as a whole. These informants were more involved in helping individuals with personal problems, suggesting perhaps a pre-disposition for community work. In any case, many informants reported that ESL teachers need to be comfortable with ethnic diversity and open to challenges to their assumptions. Perhaps this is also true of others whose work in government or service industries brings them into contact with recent immigrants and adults with limited fluency in the language of the dominant community.

What then can be said about the significance of this study in light of the findings and implications outlined above? Research grounded in field work supports the development of grounded theory and enhances understanding of a particular kind of human interaction.[80] This study, in describing the range of viewpoints on the ESL teacher's intercultural role, documents their awareness of the intercultural dynamic in the ESL classroom. The informants acknowledge the implicit nature of culture and language to a far greater degree than is evident in most ESL learning theories and most ESL materials. In addition, the interviews afforded a group of ESL teachers the opportunity to reflect upon the ways they think about this important aspect of their work. The analysis of the field data provides a framework for further discussion of the ESL teacher's intercultural role and at the same time presents accounts of individual's experience of this complex role. These accounts will no doubt be of interest to practioners, teacher educators, and other researchers in the field.

2. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings of this study describe the range of perspectives on the cultural aspects of the ESL teacher's role as uncovered in ethnographic interviews with thirty-five instructors at a community college. The findings cannot be generalized to other ESL teachers in other settings, nor do they present causal analysis of the perceptions reported. As a first effort at description from the point of view of individual teachers, the study is a particular portrayal of a selected slice of the informants' experience. Its usefulness may be in the extent to which it promotes discussion in the field, and in its capacity to provide a basis for further research into the cultural aspects of ESL teaching and learning.

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[80] M. Hammersley and P. Atkinson *Ethnography: Principles in Practice.* (London: Tavistock Publications), 1983.

The following suggestions for research projects extend the intentions and build on the findings of the present study:

1. Long term observations in one ESL class, or in a number of classes to document aspects of culture teaching, 'explaining and interpreting' for example, and to compare teachers' reports with observed interactions.

2. A survey of a large number of ESL teachers could use the intercultural role dimensions in order to collect the teachers' views on the intercultural aspects of ESL, perhaps for comparison with their demographic information.

3. A survey or interview study of ESL learners to document their perceptions of enculturation or their growing familiarity with Canadian society, and their ideas on their teachers' role in that process.

4. An examination of ESL materials and curricula to determine the view of Canadian society portrayed therein, and the assumptions made about students' knowledge or need for understanding of Canadian society.

5. An interview study similar to this one, in a different setting, with teachers of children for example. Or perhaps a study of social service agency workers to determine their perceived role in the settlement of immigrant families.

B. CONCLUDING REMARKS

1. A FINAL WORD FROM THE RESEARCHER

I would like to think that the ESL teachers who participated in this study did so because they recognized that the field of ESL has ignored and underestimated the intercultural dynamic for too long. While most of the informants said that they found the relationship between culture and language an interesting one, a great many said they had never really considered how culture entered into their own work. Some informants said that they had little confidence in their abilty to handle the intercultural role that comes along with ESL work.

What is the cultural role of the ESL teacher? The ESL teacher is both linguistic and cultural informant for the language learner. As the need arises, and depending upon several interpersonal factors, the ESL teacher is sometimes like a role model, a friend, a counsellor, or an advocate. The intercultural aspects of the relationship between these teachers and their adult students was in some ways always changing, re-negociated daily by the people involed.

Cultural knowledge and culture teaching are usually taken for granted in ESL and elsewhere; this study provides an examination of the ESL teacher's role in teaching culture through the perceptions and experiences of a group of teachers. It aims to serve as a catalyst for discussion and a basis for further research into the cultural aspects of English as a Second Language instruction.

2. A FINAL WORD FROM THE INFORMANTS

I leave the final word in this report to the informants. The first five quotations below are in response to a hypothetical question, "What would you tell a student teacher who asked you how to handle culture in her ESL class?" The instructors' advice provides a summary of their approaches, their cautions, and their concerns. The last three quotes are from informants who were asked if they liked their work as adult ESL teachers.

> I would say to that student teacher to make it as much a learning experience for themselves as it is going to be for the students. If they'll open up to the students and ask them questions and want to know about their cultures, the students are going to get something from the teacher's culture too. It has to be a two way street. And if that interest isn't there, I don't know what they're doing in the job. (T#17 p. 46)

I guess my first thought is to be yourself in the classroom. And if you're being yourself, you're not going to hide your culture. You're not going to be able to hide it and there's no reason to hide it either. I don't see how you can avoid culture and the cultural aspects of language. It goes along together.
(T#24 p. 34)

I'd say, first of all, just handle them as people, as individuals in a class. You can't possibly know, or expect to know everything that everybody comes from, because you never will. You can't really anticipate their problems or how they'll react to each other. I think a lot of it has to do with trying to be open to the situation and what's going on, and creating a friendly atmosphere in the classroom. Get everybody to know each other, and do things together. I think that does work.
(T#14 p. 47)

Be very careful, because you don't want to offend your students. You don't want them to think that you're trying to tell them that Canadian culture is superior. Or that their culture is substandard or something like that. You don't want them to have that kind of impression of you. What you want to do is to make them realize that Canadian culture probably is different from their own culture and if they want to stay here for good, then that's the culture they have to adapt to, they have to respect, they have to find themselves in.
(T#34 p.27)

I try to accept them as they are and especially the ones who could be trouble makers. I try to listen to them and then if they're not ready to be involved in what's Canadian then they're not going to, I mean they won't have to. I mean they won't have to accept the fact that they're in Canada, and they don't have to accept the fact that they have to accept things Canadian if they're going to live here. They themselves have to come to that. It's not for me to tell them, so if they stick to their own culture, that's fine. If they come up with their own cultural things then I try to listen to them, and usually I try to accept them. But at the same time I do say that things are different in Canada. Certain Canadians act this way, certain things are done this way and you just cannot change those facts. And it's very difficult for them if they cannot accept things Canadian. I do say things like that, but I try not

to encourage them to be Canadian. I don't think I do that.
(T#30 p. 28)

Basically I like meeting people, talking to them. I really enjoy doing community work and I think I sort of enjoy this kind of thing because very often you end up doing that, although sometimes it gets to be too much. And also preparation and everything and the more you get involved, the more it takes out of you. But I really enjoy it.
(T#27 p. 22)

I really like this job. You know, I think part of it comes from my background because I grew up in an immigrant group. But, there aren't a lot of things you can do where you can see that you directly help somebody. I mean they're so eager, and so respectful. It could be a real ego trip if you allowed it, you know. Ah, yeah, I really enjoy it.
(T#8 p. 15)

I like meeting people who are struggling to survive. There is such a tremendous amount of energy there that this country needs so badly and that the whole world needs. They've left everything behind. There's no turning back. They've been through hell and yet they're trying, they're struggling to somehow survive and to somehow make their kids adapt and things like that. I find it extremely, well, it's very meaningful to me.
(T#29 p. 29)

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APPENDIX A - LETTER ASKING FOR PARTICIPANTS

An open letter to ESL instructors at the college

Re: ESL Teachers' Perspectives on Teaching Canadian Culture

A research project by Tracy Defoe (M.A. student, Curriculum and Instruction Dept., UBC) under the supervision of Dr. Kogila Adam-Moodley (Assistant Professor, Social and Educational Studies, UBC) and Dr. Bernard Mohan (Associate Professor, Language Education, UBC).

The purpose of the study is to describe ESL teachers' perspectives on the cultural aspects of teaching English to adults.

In order to give various points of view representation, ESL teachers from different kinds of programs will be interviewed.

The individual interviews are informal, and will vary according to information given by the instructor - a standard questionnaire is not used. The focus is on how the instructor deals with the cultural aspects of the teacher's role.

If you agree to take part in the study, an interview will be arranged at a time and place of convenience to you. The interview will take about one hour of your time. To ensure accuracy, I would like to audio-tape record the conversation.

Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured throughout. No names or distinguishing characteristics will be used in the research report. As a participating instructor, you would have the right to refuse to answer any questions or to withdraw at any time without prejudice.

I know that your perspective would be a valuable contribution to this project which aims to increase our understanding of the cultural aspects of ESL teaching as experienced by instructors in the classroom.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about the project.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope you will consider offering your perspective to the study.

Tracy Defoe
Center for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction

APPENDIX B - CONSENT FORM

Re: ESL Teachers' Perspectives on Teaching Canadian Culture
A research project by Tracy Defoe (M.A. student, Curriculum and Instruction Dept., UBC) under the supervision of Dr. Kogila Adam-Moodley (Assistant Professor, Social and Educational Studies, UBC) and Dr. Bernard Mohan (Associate Professor, Language Education, UBC).

The purpose of the study is to describe ESL teachers' perspectives on the cultural aspects of teaching English to adults. In order to give various points of view representation, ESL teachers from different kinds of programs will be interviewed.

The individual interviews are informal, and will vary according to information given by the instructor - a standard questionnaire is not used. The focus is on how the instructor deals with the cultural aspects of the teacher's role.

If you agree to take part in the study, an interview will be arranged at a time and place of convenience to you. The interview will take about one hour of your time. To ensure accuracy, I would like to audio-tape record the conversation.

Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured throughout. No names or distinguishing characteristics will be used in the research report. As a participating instructor, you would have the right to refuse to answer any questions or to withdraw at any time without prejudice.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about the project.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope you will consider offering your perspective to the study.

Tracy Defoe
Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction

I have read and understood the information above, and understand that I have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time without prejudice.
I offer my informed consent to participate in this project.

Date: __________ Signature: ________________

APPENDIX C - INFORMANTS' LIST OF THE ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

The following is a short list of what the informants named as the elements of culture in their classes:

-"Everything."

-Survival skills, (i.e. taking the bus, going to the bank, emergencies).

-Basic information about Canada, (organized around topics).

-Language use. Appropriate level, register, and word use for a given situation.

-Gestures and body language.

-Fitting into the system and using it, (re: health, government, employment).

-Attitudes (toward women, the law, working, etc.).

-Getting along with people who are different.

-Understanding societal values (of time, of the individual etc.).

-Assumptions that underly Canadian social systems.

-Styles, options, range of ways to live.

-Kinds of music, popular sports, entertainment and recreation.